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MARION HARRIS, Comedienne

See Page
Six

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A TRIBUTE TO MARION HARRIS By George Wagner and Tim Gracyk	2
IN PURSUIT OF THE FIRST "JAZZ" SONG By Mike Montgomery	11
HARRY A. YERKES, MYSTERY MAN By Brian Rust	14
EARLY ZON-O-PHONES: THICK DISCS By David Rocco	17
A. C. GILBERT AND THE BOB-O-LINK RECORD By Allan Sutton	18
AN INTRODUCTION TO <i>THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD</i>	20
SOUND-BOX RESTORATION By David Spanovich	23
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POPULAR RECORDING PIONEERS By Tim Gracyk and Frank Hoffmann	26
COLLINS AND HARLAN By Tim Gracyk and Frank Hoffmann	28
BILLY MURRAY: THE EARLY YEARS By Frank Hoffmann	35
HANDY'S "THE 'ST. LOUIS BLUES'": AN AMERICAN CLASSIC By Tom Morgan	41
EDITOR'S COMMENTS By Tim Gracyk	44
ANNE LENNER: "SING FOR YOUR SUPPER" By Charles Hippisley-Cox	48
CORRECTIONS TO <i>THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RECORDED SOUND IN THE UNITED STATES</i>	50
INDEX TO THE MUSIC COLUMNS OF <i>HOBBIES</i> MAGAZINE By Richard Arsenty	54

CD REVIEWS

<i>Swinging Down The Lane: Isham Jones And His Orchestra (Memphis Archives MA7014)</i>	63
<i>Francesco Tamagno, The Complete Recordings, 1903-1904 (Symposium 1186/87)</i>	66
<i>A Ragtime Primer (PianoMania CD-123)</i>	69
<i>Phil Harris: Echoes From The Cocoanut Grove (Take Two 416CD)</i>	80

BOOK REVIEWS

Larry F. Kiner and Philip R. Evans' <i>Al Jolson—A Bio-Discography</i> (Scarecrow Press)	72
Titta Ruffo's <i>My Parabola</i> (Baskerville Publishers)	74
Andre Millard's <i>America On Record: A History Of Recorded Sound</i> (Cambridge University Press)	76

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A TRIBUTE TO MARION HARRIS

By George Wagner and Tim Gracyk

Marion Harris was one of the most popular recording artists of the late 'teens and early '20s. She remained an important singer despite making relatively few recordings after 1925. Celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic, she was a Broadway, vaudeville, and cabaret headliner.

Harris was among the first to record such standards as Creamer and Layton's "After You've Gone" (1918), Isham Jones' "I'll See You In My Dreams" (1925), Jones' "It Had To Be You" (1924), and George Gershwin's "The Man I Love" (1927). Her version of "I'll See You In My Dreams" was cut only weeks after Isham Jones recorded his composition as an instrumental with Ray Miller's Orchestra on December 4, 1925. She recorded "It Had To Be You" around March of 1924, weeks before Isham Jones recorded it on April 24, 1924, and months before team Aileen Stanley and Billy Murray recorded it for Victor on June 5, 1924.

Her recordings helped establish several songs as standards, including "I Ain't Got Nobody," "Look For The Silver Lining," "Tea For Two," "I'm Nobody's Baby," "Some Sunny Day," "There'll Be Some Changes Made," and "I'm Just Wild About Harry."

From 1916 to the end of her American recording career in late 1930, Harris recorded over 100 issued titles for Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick. In London she recorded a total of ten titles for Columbia and Decca, her last sessions in 1934. She also appeared in M-G-M sound shorts and a feature sound film.

Between making her first acoustic disc in 1916 and her first electrical disc in 1927, Harris changed dramatically as a singer. She began by singing mostly comic songs, blues, and Tin Pan Alley songs about blues as well as about the new music known as "jass." Towards the mid-1920s her records show greater versatility and by the late '20s the voice was different from earlier years. By this time she sang in the more intimate manner of

torch singers Ruth Etting and Helen Morgan though her late recordings suggest Harris had more vocal training than these singers.

In short, she evolved from vaudeville "shouter," in the tradition of Sophie Tucker and Nora Bayes, to crooner. Her transition to electric recording was not successful in commercial terms since her late American 78s sold poorly, but they offer superb performances. Her transition was not as successful as Aileen Stanley's, for example. In the early to mid-'20s, Harris and Stanley recorded some of the same songs for different companies, including "Sweet Mama (Papa's Getting Mad)," "You've Got To See Mama Every Night," "I'm Nobody's Baby," "Nobody's Sweetheart," "It Had To Be You," and "Somebody Loves Me," the Gershwin classic introduced by Winnie Lightner in George White's Scandals of 1924.

THE EARLY YEARS

Marion Harris was born Mary Ellen Harrison in 1896, according to obituaries. The month and day are still unknown. Jim Walsh reports in the August 1963 issue of Hobbies that Harris' 1944 death certificate gave her father's name as James Harrison, but nothing else is known of him. The name of the mother is also unknown but soon after she died on September 27, 1920, Variety announced that "the mother of Marion Harris" died. The mother's name is not actually given.

Newspaper obituaries state that Harris was born in Henderson, Kentucky, but we find no records of a Mary Ellen Harrison in Henderson County, Kentucky, not even of her branch of the Harrison family. The singer is said to have been the granddaughter or grandniece of "Senator Harrison of Kentucky," but Kentucky never had a Senator Harrison. Other sources, such as the 1922 Columbia catalog, say she was the granddaughter of "General Harrison of Civil War fame." That war

produced—on both sides—several generals named Harrison. Connecting the singer to any of them is difficult. The September 1920 Columbia supplement states, "Marion Harris is a Kentucky girl and a descendant of Benjamin Harrison." It is not clear if Harris descended from President Harrison or the earlier Benjamin Harrison who signed the Declaration of Independence.

In 1910, when Marion was 14, her parents sent her to a Chicago convent that was a boarding school. She evidently ran away from this. According to an obituary printed on April 26, 1944 in Variety, "Miss Harris began her theatrical career by singing with colored slides that motion pictures houses used to use, and it was in an obscure theatre that the late Vernon Castle discovered her. She was brought to New York by Charles Dillingham and opened in [the] latter's star-studded production of 'Stop, Look, and Listen.'..." Irving Berlin's Stop! Look! Listen! was one of 1915's most successful shows.

An early press notice mentioning Harris is in the New York Telegram, dated January 7, 1916: "The latest addition to the cast of the new Midnight Frolic, which is to be produced in about a week, is Marian [sic] Harris. When Stop! Look! Listen! began its career in Philadelphia, Miss Harris was prominent in the cast. In fact, it was she who originally sang 'I Love A Piano' and other favorite

numbers. For some reason her engagement abruptly terminated, and they do say—but that's another story. At any rate, Miss Harris, who comes from the West, will get a New York hearing with the Ziegfeld company."

Harris is cited in the New York Telegram 19 days later in a review of Flo Ziegfeld's new Midnight Frolic. Under the heading "Miss Harris Speedily Scores," a reviewer reports, "A newcomer was Marian [sic] Harris and in two numbers she sang her way into immediate favor. Miss Harris is of the Blossom Seeley type of singer, possessed of pleasing voice and ingratiating personality."

Her name is misspelled as "Marian" elsewhere, including on the sheet music for the 1917 "Sweet Daddy" (the cover calls this song "the only real jazz song"). She appeared several times on sheet music covers.

FIRST RECORDINGS: VICTOR YEARS

Her first recording, "I Ain't Got Nobody Much," was made on August 9, 1916 and was issued as Victor 18133 in October. The 1915 classic song is sometimes known as "I Ain't Got Nobody (And Nobody Cares For Me)" and may be regarded as an early theme song for Harris since she recorded it for Victor in 1916; Columbia on April 21, 1920; and Brunswick in early 1923. The song has a complicated history, which is reflected by Victor and Brunswick citing Spencer Williams and Roger Graham as composers while the Columbia disc credits "Warfield." David Jasen's Tin Pan Alley reports that Charles Warfield and David Young had copyrighted the song as "I Ain't Got Nobody" (the "Much" is missing) in 1914, and it is not clear which set of composers deserves song credit.

According to Brian Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography, Harris also sang "My Syncopated Melody Man" during that first session on August 9, but Victor rejected the take. During her fourth recording session (on November 17—three months later) she sang this again and it was issued as Victor 18152. Lyrics are typical of songs Harris recorded in these early years:



*If you should ever happen to be down my way
And you want to hear a fellow who can play
On an old piano
In a raggy manner
Stop in old Savannah any day
He is always fooling with the ivories
Liking funny syncopated harmonies
There is nothing sweeter
Than the raggy meter of his melody
My syncopated man
Plays a rag like no one can
When he sits down at that piano...*

Victor's February 1917 supplement states, "If you like ragtime, you can get all you want from 'Syncopated Max,' who has 'a way of his own,' according to Marion Harris in 'My Syncopated Melody Man,' written and composed by Blanche Merrill and Eddie Cox." The supplement is incorrect—Harris sings "syncopated man," not "Syncopated Max." The disc's reverse side features Spencer Williams' "Paradise Blues," with lyrics by Walter Hirsch about blues piano:

*Down old Mobile way
In a cabaret
There sits Ragtime Lew
He can show you how to "blue"
On that piano...
Honey, don't play me no op'ra
Play me some blue melody
I don't care nothing 'bout Carmen
When I hear that harmony...*

An example of her early association with jazz is her mid-1917 recording of Gene Buck and Dave Stamper's "When I Hear That Jazz Band Play" (Victor 18398) from Flo Ziegfeld's Midnight Frolic. Although it is one of the earliest published songs to refer to this new music, it is not the song of the same title that Mike Montgomery discusses later in this issue of V78J (Eddie Gray copyrighted a song with this name in May 1916). About the Harris version, the December 1917 Victor supplement states:

"Say what you will, you cannot keep still while they're playing," is the verdict Marion Harris sings regarding the Jazz Band, and it is true.

Other songs about "jazz" recorded by Harris are Merrill and Jerome's "Jazz Baby" (Victor 18555), Wendling's "Take Me To The Land Of Jazz" (Victor 18593), and Morgan's "I'm A Jazz Vampire" (Columbia A-3328). The melody and lyrics of the 1920 tune "I'm A Jazz Vampire" owe much to the successful 1919 "Jazz Baby."

A clipping from the Kansas City Star dated September 1, 1918, indicates the 22 year-old Harris was part of Madame Sarah Bernhardt's company during the French actress' 1918 tour. It also alludes to Harris' recording success in glowing terms (perhaps written by a press agent): "By singing two songs in a big musical show in New York, [Harris] took the honors away from the star of the production! That sounds like it might have been Ray Samuels, but it wasn't. It was Marion Harris on the same bill this week with Mme. Sarah Bernhardt at the Orpheum. It might be said that Miss Harris's voice is better known in the home than the theater because there are probably few owners of talking machines who have no record of her voice. She specializes in 'rag' songs. This is her second season in vaudeville."

Variety on November 22, 1918 confirms that Harris was a newcomer to vaudeville at this time: "Marion Harris, comparatively new to New York vaudeville, may be said to have stopped the show. Tall, very blonde, her locks dressed in an original fashion, she is an animated picture of youthful vivacity." A Newark newspaper character-

That "JAZZ BABY" Just Has To Jazz



izes a performance given months earlier in January this way: "Songland's newest production, Marion Harris sang her way into the hearts of the typical Newark audience and in addition to the word 'newest' can add 'best.'"

The April 15, 1919 issue of The Talking Machine World reports Harris being among the Victor artists who entertained at that year's annual banquet of the Talking Machine Men, Inc., a trade organization. Other vocalists were Henry Burr, Billy Murray, and Arthur Fields. The Van Eps Quintet provided dance music.

THE COLUMBIA YEARS

Harris moved from Victor to Columbia in early 1920, beginning her Columbia career with "Left All Alone Again Blues" (A-2939). For Columbia, Harris recorded many songs with "blues" in the title, including the W.C. Handy tunes "St. Louis Blues" (A-2944), "Memphis Blues" (A-3474), and "Beale Street Blues" (A-3474). In his autobiography, W.C. Handy speaks of Harris moving from Victor to Columbia though he does not mention the companies by name: "Marion Harris, celebrated white blues singer, left a recording company that objected to her making a record of St. Louis Blues. Miss Harris had used our numbers in vaudeville for a long time, and she sang blues so well that people hearing her records sometimes thought that the singer was colored. When she signed with another company that permitted her to select her own material--often from our catalogue--one of the managers of this company [Victor] got hot under the collar."

Handy's autobiography has many inaccuracies, so one may view with skepticism his suggestion that Harris left Victor because of a conflict over "St. Louis Blues." It is possible that Victor executives turned down requests by Harris to record Handy tunes--for marketing or other reasons. Handy's passage could lead one to conclude that Victor would not record Handy compositions, but the company often recorded them, beginning with the Victor Military Band recording "The Memphis Blues" on July 15, 1914.

In 1921, a year after Harris left Victor, the company issued the Original Dixieland Jazz Band performing "St. Louis Blues," which enjoyed success.

Harris did record "St. Louis Blues" within her first month at Columbia after recording five other titles. She evidently was partial to "St. Louis Blues," recording it again in early 1923 for Brunswick (2395).

Harris may have left Victor because Columbia offered a better contract--more money or, as Handy suggests, more artistic control, perhaps both. Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography shows that everything Harris recorded in her last five sessions for Victor--from July 18 to November 18, 1919--went unissued. While it is possible she left because Victor failed to issue what she recorded, it is also possible she rejected those takes. Rust's discography also shows her earliest Columbia takes being rejected.

The Talking Machine World publicized the move to Columbia. Harris essentially defected from the industry's largest company, and Columbia made the most of this, helping dealers set up shop displays by providing Harris posters, window streamers, hearing room hangers, cardboard cut-outs. Columbia declared an official Marion Harris Week from August 28 to September 3, 1920.

Many of her Columbia discs sold well. Bandleaders providing accompaniment included Charles A. Prince and Paul Biese. The 1922 Columbia catalog states, "Marion Harris, who really is Mary Ellen Harrison, is a granddaughter of the late General Harrison of Civil War fame. When asked how she came to choose negro songs for her type, Miss Harris guessed, 'It just came naturally. When you first get over stage fright your one instinctive thought is to please. In order to please you must do your best, and you usually do best what comes naturally. So I just naturally started singing Southern dialect songs and the modern blues songs, which closely resemble the darky folk songs.'" The catalog includes a photo.

Harris remained with Columbia for two years, shifting to Brunswick in August, 1922. Columbia had financial troubles at this time in contrast to Brunswick enjoying enormous success,

taking Columbia's place as the industry's second largest disc company.

THE BRUNSWICK YEARS

The Brunswick acoustical process was arguably better than Victor's and Columbia's at capturing Harris' voice. Her first Brunswick disc, made with the Isham Jones Orchestra, featured "My Cradle Melody" backed by Shuffle Along's "I'm Just Wild About Harry" (Vaughn De Leath recorded this months earlier for Gennett). On Brunswick discs she is often accompanied by Carl Fenton's Orchestra. Aside from a single Victor record made in 1927, Harris was an exclusive Brunswick recording artist for almost a decade.

Brunswick categorized its new artist as a comic singer—at first. The January 1923 Brunswick supplement states, "Marion Harris, the ever-applauded Comedienne, is up to her habitual tricks of making the world laugh." The 1923 Brunswick catalog stresses her appeal as a blues artist: "A supreme artist in her own particular field is Marion Harris, vaudeville's darling, known from coast to coast as 'the Queen of Blues Singers.' Her voice has a sweetness and sympathy of deep appeal and

her charming prettiness and good humor always bring the maximum of encores on the Keith Vaudeville Circuit where she is a headliner...Harris usually wins the house to the point of stopping the show and the popularity of her records may be judged by the fact that one of them broke all records for number of copies sold. Miss Harris records for Brunswick exclusively." It is not clear which Harris disc sold so well.

By 1925, Brunswick presented Harris in its catalog as a versatile artist "with great emotional qualities." She was recording a wide range of material. The 1925 catalog states, "Marion Harris, the inimitable, enjoys the enviable position of being a reigning favorite in American vaudeville. Her great popularity is due to a magnetic personality added to a charming and fascinating voice which has a very deep appeal. As a singer with great emotional qualities, she is unsurpassed. Miss Harris is largely responsible for the rapidly increasing demand for popular vocal records. Her splendid Brunswick Records of unusual, though artistic interpretations, are much called for by her many enthusiastic and exacting admirers."

She recorded for Brunswick regularly from August 1922 to April 1925. Many of her early Brunswicks feature the type of songs she had recorded for Victor and Columbia. Even some late Brunswick discs, such as her jazzy 1924 "Charleston Charlie," share much with her 1916 "My Syncopated Man." But for Brunswick she also recorded romantic and sentimental songs, sometimes singing to piano accompaniment after an orchestral introduction, which allowed Harris to sustain notes, sing softly, and achieve greater intimacy (in contrast to her Victor recordings with steady orchestral accompaniment that encouraged Harris to belt out songs). Titles that show this intimacy include the 1923 "I've Been Saving For A Rainy Day" (2470) and the 1924 "Jealous" (2622). Her last acoustic Brunswick shares little with the earlier comic and blues work, instead foreshadowing the crooning style that would be fashionable in the late '20s. She sings very slowly in waltz time the tune "When You And I Were Seventeen," sustaining notes as in no earlier recording.



A signed Harris disc from a Los Angeles club appearance in the summer of 1923.

She stopped recording for a period when Brunswick shifted to the electrical process. Perhaps company executives or Harris did not feel her voice was suited for the electrical process. It is more likely that stage work and family took precedence over recordings.

Throughout the 1920s Harris was a core performer at the New York Palace, usually guaranteeing a sold-out house. The New York Times reviewed several of her Palace appearances. The high point of her Broadway career was 1927, with Harris enjoying success in Yours Truly, which opened on January 25, and A Night In Spain, which opened on May 3 (Harris may not have been in the opening cast). A hit, it ran for 174 performances and featured, among others, Helen Kane and Aileen Stanley.

In 1929 Harris was in the Philadelphia stage production of Great Day! but was not in the Broadway cast. She sang the classic "More Than You Know" in that show. In Max Wilk's 1973 book They're Playing Our Song, Edward Eliscu, who wrote lyrics for the song along with Billy Rose, recalls composer Vincent Youmans being impressed by Harris' delivery: "Youmans was a person who could not be influenced...Youmans changed his melodies only once, so far as I know. That was when we were doing Great Day out of town, with a wonderful singer named Marion Harris--she sang 'More Than You Know.' The ending of that song, as he had written it, was a nice, beautiful, original ending. But Marion Harris, being a pop singer of those times, wanted to end it with a very corny, wavering climax. When she did, it was so effective that Youmans let her keep it that way..." Harris never recorded this.

She returned to Broadway in 1930 in The Second Little Show.

By the time she resumed recording activities in the electrical era, her singing style had changed. Popular music itself had changed, and Harris kept pace with new trends. Her first electrical recording is something of an anomaly. She had a single Victor recording session in Chicago on December 8, 1927. The two songs



recorded were issued as Victor 21116: "Did You Mean It?" and, on the "B" side, "The Man I Love." Victor was evidently eager for Harris to record the song "Did You Mean It?" composed by Phil Baker, Sid Silvers and Abe Lyman. Baker himself plays accordion on the Victor disc. Harris introduced the song in the Broadway show A Night In Spain. Abe Lyman recorded the song months earlier, on September 5 (Brunswick 3648). Others recorded it before Harris, notably Nat Shilkret's Virginians on November 25, 1927 with Lewis James as vocalist. Shilkret performs it at a quicker pace than Harris, who is very much a torch singer here. Harris gives a superb performance.

Harris was among the first to record "The Man I Love." Hers may be the first issued recording of Gershwin's classic. Adele Astaire sang it on stage in Philadelphia as early as 1924 but the song was removed from the show Lady, Be Good before it hit Broadway since early audiences were lukewarm towards the ballad. It was added to the 1927 out-of-town tryouts for Strike Up The Band but was again dropped. The song enjoyed greater success outside the theater than in any show. Gershwin himself credited Helen Morgan for popularizing it in New York--regrettably, Morgan never recorded it. Gene Austin may have been the first to record it, but this performance of September 15, 1927 went unissued. After Harris on December 8,

Did You Mean It?

Uke in C
With Piano Tune Thus
G C E A

Words and Music by
PHIL BAKER
SID SILVERS and
ABE LYMAN



Sam Lanin's Famous Players was next to record it—on December 9, 1927 for Okeh, with Irving Kaufman singing as "George Beaver." Grace Hayes recorded it on December 19, 1927, and Hayes' version of Gershwin's tune is also backed by "Did You Mean It?". Harry Hudson's band recorded it in London in mid-January 1928. Nat Shilkret was next on January 26, 1928 (unissued) and then February 9, the take being issued as a Troubadours disc without vocal.

Harris' first electrical Brunswicks were recorded in Chicago in late 1929. These are outstanding performances but the time was wrong to stage a recording comeback. The discs did not sell well and are rare.

MARRIAGES, FILMS, TRAGIC DEATH

In 1924 Harris married Rush B. Hughes, a stage actor, occasional silent film actor, and radio performer. Hughes was around 19 at the time of the marriage, nearly ten years younger. Her father-in-law was Rupert Hughes, best-selling novelist, biographer, musicologist, and senior editor of Encyclopedia Britannica. The industrialist Howard Hughes was Rush B. Hughes' cousin. The marriage produced two children: Rush B. Hughes, Jr. (known as Sonny) and Mary Ellen Hughes. If living today, they would be around 70 years old.

After divorcing Hughes in 1927 (another source says 1928), Harris married Robert Williams. This actor made a handful of films, the last and most famous being the 1931 Platinum Blonde in which he appeared with Jean Harlow. Soon after

this film was completed he succumbed to an appendicitis attack. The only child of this marriage, Marilyn Williams, appeared in a few late 1940s British films. This daughter also was billed as a London and New York stage performer from around 1948 to 1953 as "Marion Harris, Jr." If alive, she would be in her mid-60's today.

In 1928 Harris began making films. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer billed her as "The Songbird of Jazz" in early shorts with sound. In an M-G-M Metro-Movietone filmed in the summer of 1928, she sings "I'm Afraid Of You" and "We Love It." The singer opens with a rhyming prologue about how she lacks a song, then picks up a phone to hear Irving Berlin on the other end (or so the audience is told) recommending "I'm Afraid Of You." Accompaniment is provided by an unidentified pianist, possibly Jack Austin.

In this early period of sound film recording, when pre- and post-scoring were mostly unknown, song and dance acts were photographed live throughout the duration of the act. For the 1928 Harris short, two cameras were used, one in a full shot, the other in a medium close-up. Though this is priceless film footage of Harris, the film is static, visually monotonous. This was a sound-on-disc production, not a sound-on-film.

A short titled Gems Of M-G-M, filmed in 1929 but not released until 1931, features Harris singing Whiting and Moret's "She's Funny That Way," also known as "He's Funny That Way." Harris actually sings it as "I'm Funny That Way." Others in the cast include the Brox Sisters and comedian Benny Rubin.

M-G-M cast her in a supporting role in Devil May Care, a musical hit of 1929. Ramon Navarro and Dorothy Jordan are the two principals who fall in love. The film's title indicates nothing about the film, which is set in France and opens at Fontainebleau with the April 11, 1814, abdication of Napoleon, whose withdrawal to Elba and subsequent landing in Provence are important to the film's plot. Harris' role is pivotal, and she is a convincing actress. Harris also sings in the film, notably the song "If He Cared," which she never recorded though it is likely she sang it on radio. The tune from the film that proved most popular, "Charming," is sung by leading man Navarro. Leo Reisman and His Orchestra recorded this and "The Shepherd's Serenade," also from Devil May Care, on November 29, 1929, with Frank Luther providing vocals. Music of all three songs was by Herbert Stothart, words by Clifford Grey.

In the September 1963 issue of Hobbies, Jim Walsh quotes a newspaper clipping from around 1930 that states Harris "is still contracted to Paramount to make a few pictures..." but no titles are known. A Photoplay issue from this period states that Harris was offered more film work because of her success in Devil May Care but evidently additional film work did not interest her.

Harris toured England in 1931—perhaps not her first tour there—and was received enthusiastically. She was successful at London's Cafe de Paris and made records with Billy Mason and His Hotel de Paris Orchestra in 1931 and 1932. Especially popular was "My Canary Has Circles Under His Eyes" (Columbia DB-453). "Is I In Love? I Is" (Columbia DB-822), with the line "Oh gosh, oh gee, gee whiz," has a coyness more typical of Helen Kane's work than Harris'. She gives a characteristically polished performance singing Walter Donaldson's "An Ev'ning In Caroline," with its unusual Hawaiian guitar accompaniment.

In America in the early '30s, Harris starred in radio shows broadcast over the WEAf-NBC network. The network billed her as "The Little Girl With The Big Voice" though the "little" here need not be taken literally—a 1918 review characterized Harris as tall. She was a guest on other programs, such as Rudy Vallee's The Fleischmann Yeast Hour

on December 10, 1931. Her last known performance on the Fleischmann Hour was on August 10, 1933. She also performed with the Ipana Troubadours on radio.

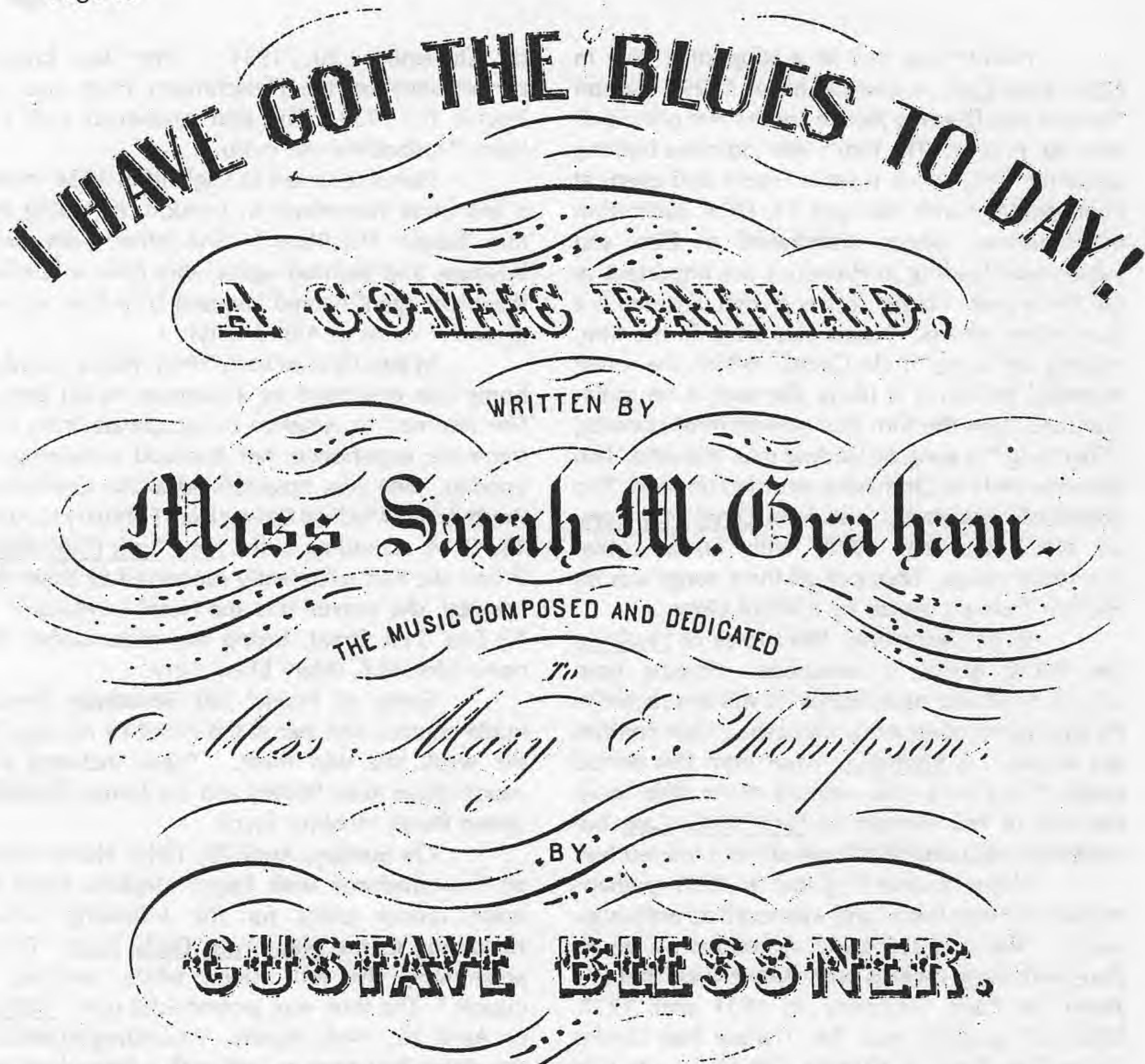
Harris returned to England in 1934, made a few more recordings in London, including the rare "Singin' The Blues." She retired from show business and married again, this time a London theatrical agent named Leonard Urry (one source gives the name as Alfred Urry).

In late 1943 or early 1944, Harris' London home was destroyed by a German rocket bomb. She returned to America to recuperate from this traumatic experience, her husband remaining in London. She was hospitalized at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center from February to April 15, 1944, according to the New York Daily Mail. When she had sufficiently recovered to leave the hospital, she moved into the Hotel Le Marquis at 12 East 31st Street, taking the room under the name Mrs. M.E. (Mary Ellen) Urry.

Some of Harris' old Broadway friends made contact with her at the Hotel Le Marquis in the week she was there. These included the vaudevillian Rose Perfect and the former Ziegfeld queen Peggy Hopkins Joyce.

On Sunday, April 23, 1944, Harris spoke on the telephone with Peggy Hopkins Joyce to make dinner plans for the following week. According to the New York Daily Mail, "Then, apparently, she fell asleep while smoking a cigaret." The time was around 6:00 p.m. Variety on April 26, 1944, reports, "According to police, the singer had gone to bed with a lighted cigaret that ignited the mattress. [It was] Not disclosed whether she died of burns or suffocation." The body was identified by Peggy Hopkins Joyce and Rose Perfect. The New York Times reported in a short article on April 25, 1944, two days after the accident, that "the one-time singing star was known to millions through her recordings and later she starred in 'A Night In Spain.'"

GEORGE WAGNER AND TIM GRACYK WELCOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT MARION HARRIS THAT READERS CAN PROVIDE. WRITE TO THEM C/O V78J.



Above is the cover of a piece of sheet music in Mike Montgomery's collection. It pre-dates the Civil War: "Entered according to Act of Congress AD 1850." Lyrics establish that "blues" here means unhappy or depressed: "Life was a rosy dream I vow/It seems a horrid nightmare now!/Then I was gayest of the gay/But I have got the blues to day!"

It is an early song using a popular slang expression—"blues"—that was adopted decades later for a genre of music. The song itself lacks a blues structure. Blues scholar David Evans writes to [V78J](#), "It is intriguing to find the word in connection with a song, but I suppose we might expect it among the thousands of songs published during the era...The blues form and songs known as 'blues' don't otherwise turn up until just after 1900."

Coming issues of [V78J](#) will discuss the earliest recordings with "blues" in the title, most of which are Tin Pan Alley compositions.

In Pursuit Of The First "Jazz" Song

By Mike Montgomery

In the last issue of Victrola and 78 Journal, Frank Powers discussed the song "That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland," with lyric by Gus Kahn, music by Henry I. Marshall, two prominent Tin Pan Alley songwriters. Powers states, "The song is important because it is, as far as anyone can determine, the earliest published song to mention the new music called 'jas.'" The song was copyrighted in 1916.

My curiosity piqued, I flipped through my large-format sheet music of "jazz" songs and found one other from 1916: "When I Hear That 'Jaz' Band Play," words by Jerry Joyce (who is completely unknown to me), music by Eddie Gray. Determining which song was the earlier meant examining the Catalogs of Copyright Entries, Part 3, Musical Compositions. A complete set is on file at the University of Michigan.

"That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland" was copyrighted on November 8, 1916 as a published composition. Two printed copies of the song were received in Washington on November 13, 1916 (it was recorded two weeks later). "When I Hear That 'Jaz' Band Play" was copyrighted in May 1916, so it wins the earliest "jazz" song honors until we can find something earlier.

The May 1916 registration raises some questions. The song was registered as an unpublished composition, and it showed that the words and music were by Eddie Gray. There was no mention of Jerry Joyce, credited for lyrics on sheet music available later in 1916. There are several ways to explain this.

At that time there was no reason to copyright a song unless you were going to do something with it. This could include the following: 1) making sure that your ownership was clearly stated if you, as the publisher, had purchased the song from the composer; 2) showing your ownership of a song that may have been performed on stage and which you wanted to protect from theft (a song shark sitting the audience might copy it down and publish it himself or sell it to someone who would publish it); 3) showing

your ownership of a song that you intended to publish later; 4) showing your ownership of a song that you wanted to license for "mechanical use" (records and piano rolls) so that the royalties would accrue to you, whether you published it or not; and 5) showing that you owned a song destined for publication (as "That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland" was published).

If Eddie Gray was a performer, the May 1916 copyright by publisher Frank Root might simply have been an indication that Root bought the song from Gray, with Gray's words and music intact. This kept Gray from legally selling the song to someone else. Nailing it down in May 1916 gave Root time to make plans for the song.

The attitude of most publishers then was that they might have to "clean up" or refine some of the raw material that they bought. If the publisher bought the song outright from Gray (for, say, \$25, \$50 or even \$100), the publisher would have asked him to waive his rights to mechanical royalties. A composer with a similar name to Gray's, Eddie Green, sold "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" to W.C. Handy in 1917 for a flat \$150, and Handy kept all the mechanical royalties.

After buying Gray's song, the publisher probably revised Gray's lyrics or inserted an entirely new set. Gray's original lyrics might not have been appropriate or appealing to buyers who were going to plunk down 40 to 50 cents for a copy of the sheet music. Jerry Joyce may have been a staff arranger or song plugger on the Frank Root payroll. While the sheet music makes it look like Gray and Joyce were collaborators--two men who wrote the song in a creative burst of energy--it is possible the two never met.

So why didn't Frank Root copyright the Gray-Joyce published version? Root may have felt that the May 1916 copyright was enough (in fact, it was). If Root did copyright the Gray-Joyce version as it appears on sheet music, he didn't do it in 1916 or 1917. Incidentally, there is no mention of Jerry Joyce as a contributor to any other song in 1916 or 1917, nor can I find anything else

WHEN I HEAR THAT "JAZ" BAND PLAY

Words by
JERRY JOYCE.

Music by
EDDIE GRAY

Moderato. (Not too slow.)

The piano introduction consists of two staves. The right staff features a series of eighth-note chords with accents, while the left staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *cresc.* (crescendo). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4.

§ VAMP.

The first vocal entry is on a single staff, with piano accompaniment on two staves below. The lyrics are: "Phoe-be Snow used to go ev-er y night / When they start, how my heart flut-ters a-round,". The piano part includes dynamics *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

The second vocal entry continues the melody, with piano accompaniment on two staves. The lyrics are: "To a hall where they all put it on right / When my feet start to beat time to that sound, / Down at that High / Seems they sim-ply". The piano part includes dynamics *mp* and *mf*. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

The third vocal entry concludes the song, with piano accompaniment on two staves. The lyrics are: "Brown Ca-fe She would join the dan-cers gay She would smile all the while / won't be-have, I can't help but start to rave Take your time, ba-by mine." The piano part includes dynamics *mp* and *mf*. The key signature remains two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

with Eddie Gray's name on it in those two years.

David Jasen's Tin Pan Alley (Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1988) mentions both Gray's song and "That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland." Jasen states that the Marshall-Kahn song was first and that "another pair of Chicagoans, Eddie Gray and Jerry Joyce, followed quickly with 'When I Hear That "Jaz" Band Play,' issued in late 1916 by Frank K. Root & Company of Chicago." Jasen's book discusses songs available to the public, and Gray's work, though registered in May, evidently did not appear until late 1916 (with Joyce's lyrics added).

Bert Williams is featured on the sheet music cover. Behind Williams are scenes from a cafe, with two couples dining and one couple dancing to the sound of a "jaz" band consisting of three black musicians. The instruments shown on the cover are banjo, violin, and guitar. None of these instruments were employed in the most important jazz band in Chicago in 1916, which was Johnny Stein's Dixie Jass Band, out of which emerged the Original Dixieland Jass Band (cornet, clarinet, trombone, piano, drums).

Does anyone know of an earlier song referring to jazz? Was Eddie Gray a black or white composer? I suspect he was black.

It is interesting that this song and "That Funny Jas Band" both employ black dialect, imply that "jaz" was perfect for dancing, and refer to cafes. A difference is that the Marshall-Kahn song alludes to the ODJB while the Gray-Joyce song does not. Here are Joyce's lyrics added at some point in mid or late 1916 to Gray's melody (with its "jaz" title) copyrighted in May of that year:

*Phoebe Snow used to go every night
To a hall where they all put it on right
Down at that High Brown Cafe
She would join the dancers gay
She would smile all the while
Dancin' around to that melody
She'd roll her eyes
Up to the skies
To that syncopated harmony
She said now:*

*[CHORUS] O my little honey
(Jes' listen to 'em playin')
I feel so very funny (see ev'rybody swayin')
When that moaning "Jaz" I hear
Seems that ev'ry step I take
I feel so very queer
Don't say you feel like dropping
(Jes' keep yourself a-turning)
You mustn't think of stopping
(My heart with love is burning)
I could dance with you all night and day
When I hear that "Jaz" band play*

*When they start, how my heart flutters around
When my feet start to beat time to that sound
Seems they simply won't behave
I can't help but start to rave
Take your time, baby mine, easy and slow
Gee, I'd like to know
What makes that band tune up so grand
And I begin to shout, "Let's go" [CHORUS]*

The song was never recorded. It should not be confused with a song of the same title recorded by Marion Harris on July 18, 1917 (Victor #18398) and later by Jaudas' Society Orchestra (Blue Amberol 3444). From Flo Ziegfeld's Midnight Frolic, that later song was composed by Gene Buck and Dave Stamper.

Mike Montgomery is perhaps best known as a piano roll expert. He pumped rolls on Biograph LPs and CDs that make available the piano roll work of Jelly Roll Morton, Scott Joplin, others.

WHEN I HEAR THAT JAZ BAND PLAY;
words and music by Eddie Gray, of
U. S.; melody only. [7859]
© 1 c. May 18, 1916; E 386030;
Frank K. Root & co., Chicago.

THAT FUNNY JAS BAND FROM DIXIE-
LAND; lyric by Gus Kahn, music by
Henry I. Marshall, of U. S. [17844]
© Nov. 8, 1916; 2 c. Nov. 18, 1916;
E 392406; Jerome H. Remick & co.,
New York.

From a catalog of copyright entries.

HARRY A. YERKES, MYSTERY MAN

By Brian Rust

Throughout the history of twentieth-century American dance music, certain names keep recurring, not so much because their owners were great musicians, but because they made an enormous number of records. Ben Selvin made a thousand sides by the time he was 25. Sam Lanin recorded for every company except Victor between 1920 and 1931. Nat Shilkret, who played cornet, clarinet, piano and organ, arranged and conducted—and accompanied—countless sessions for Victor between 1915 and 1945. Adrian Schubert was heavily employed by the Plaza group, later to become the ARC group of labels.

And there was Harry A. Yerkes. He controlled so many bands and small units that the total recording activities must exceed those of any other. He was himself a musician. His earliest traceable disc features a xylophone solo titled "Happy Heine," from December 1905 or January 1906 (single-sided Columbia 3348). Another early disc from the same period is a bell solo titled "Simplicity—Intermezzo," issued by Columbia as a single-sider on 3361, later as a double on A-878.

The first discs of Yerkes Jazarimba Orchestra were issued in November 1917 on the Starr Piano Co. label as well as the related Gennett Art Tone label. One title is George M. Cohan's "Over There." The ensemble recorded two titles for Columbia slightly earlier but the company did not issue these until April 1918 (A2482).

"H.A. Yerkes," district manager of the Columbia Graphophone Company, is mentioned often in Talking Machine World. Issues from 1917 refer to him as Columbia's "Middle West district manager." The February 15, 1918 issue reports his promotion to "field sales manager," which required his moving from Chicago to New York. The May, 1918 issue refers to him as "one of the most popular members of the Columbia Graphophone Co.'s sales staff, who has been occupying the post of field manager since the first of the year, has been appointed assistant to H.L. Willson, vice-president

and general manager of the company, and will in the future make his headquarters at the executive offices in the Woolworth Building, New York."

This Columbia connection accounts for the heavy preponderance of bands bearing Yerkes' name (and several that did not) recording for Columbia from 1918 onwards, at least until 1923. The July 15, 1919 issue of The Talking Machine World reports, "The Columbia Graphophone Co. has just made a contract with Harry A. Yerkes, of Yerkes' Novelty Orchestra, for the exclusive right to record the work of the saxophone sextet with the understanding that the organization shall be known as the Columbia Saxophone Sextette." Before this, Yerkes managed to lead sessions with such very different companies as Victor, Gennett, Vocalion, Grey Gull, Lyric, and Paramount.

I once interviewed Tom Brown, the legendary white New Orleans trombonist who took part in all the Yerkes sessions that used a trombone, which included Victor's All Star Trio and their Orchestra. Yerkes managed the All Star Trio. Several of its many recordings are of interest as jazz, such as "I Might Be Your Once-In-A-While" (Emerson 10151, recorded around February 1920), on which alto saxophonist Wheeler Wadsworth, who had worked in Chicago with Tom Brown in 1916, plays two improvised choruses that are very forward-looking. George Green's xylophone offers interesting variations on many of the themes, and on "Twelfth Street Rag" (Victor 18713, HMV B-1262) the Trio becomes a quartet with the addition of an extra pianist, composer Max Kortlander, who joins the regular man Victor Arden to produce some attractive music.

The full orchestra under Harry A. Yerkes' nominal direction seldom produced much jazz, nor did the early 1920s recordings of Yerkes' S.S. Flotilla Orchestra. But the earlier Columbias of the Happy Six offer some worthwhile music. The Louisiana Five, connected albeit tenuously with the

Original Dixieland Jazz Band through clarinetist Alcide Nunez having played with both bands, had apparently disintegrated at the end of 1919 or the beginning of 1920. Nunez became a member of the Yerkes roster for the time being, and he is heard on the Happy Six's "Shake Your Little Shoulder" (Columbia A-2929) and on "Railroad Blues" by Yerkes Southern Five on the other side, recorded February 28 and March 5, 1920 respectively. Nunez can also be heard on "Poppy Blossoms" and "The Time Will Come," tunes interpolated into the main number, "Mystery" (Columbia A-2905, recorded January 11, 1920). He and Tom Brown impart a joyous Dixieland jazz flavor to these recordings.

Harry A. Yerkes was also the agent for the American Five, which left New York on January 11, 1920, and arrived in England nine days later. Their full story has been told to my friend and colleague Mark Berresford by their drummer, Eddie Grossbart (see *Storyville* 102, August-September 1982). He was also the drummer of Ross Gorman's Novelty Syncopators, apparently another Yerkes band, which made two titles for Columbia in New York on September 27, 1919. One, "Barking Dog," was issued on Columbia A-2844 and

despite the canine imitations, this is a lusty piece of Dixieland jazz. Those chiefly responsible were cornetist Clarence Grancy (or Gransie) and trombonist Keith Pitman. Both can be heard on two sides by the White Way Jazz Band on Paramount 20014, recorded without a drummer during the first half of 1920. One side features the only "Tiger Rag" I know of that omits the tiger roar.

Grancy at least is also present on the Happy Six's "Dance-O-Mania" (Columbia A-2949), recorded May 18, 1920. He and Pitman were the brass section of Art Hickman's New York London Five that came to London in the autumn of 1920 and played for a year or a little more in the Italian Roof Garden of the Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly, and on eleven issued sides on HMV. Was Harry A. Yerkes responsible for the formation of this quintet? What was their connection with West Coast bandleader Art Hickman, who never visited England at all?

That Yerkes and Hickman were well-known to each other is surely beyond question, for Yerkes, in his elevated capacity in the Columbia organization, had probably arranged the long series of sides made for his company by the regular Art Hickman orchestra, in the saxophone section of which was a man of great versatility who played soprano and also saxes, clarinet and oboe. I refer to Bert Ralton, who would later direct the original Savoy Havana Band in London, take a band to Australia, direct another in London between returning from the Antipodes and setting out for South Africa, where he became the victim of a shooting accident on January 16, 1927.

Ralton was no jazz man, but he had an unmistakable tone that is recognizable on the Happy Six record of "You're The Sweetest Girl" (Columbia A-3446, recorded June 27, 1921). He may be on "Paper Doll" (Columbia A-3441), recorded two days earlier, on which there is some faint but interesting clarinet work that just might be Nunez. There is also another side by the Happy Six—"Fancies" (Columbia A-3482, recorded on September 27, 1921)—that contains some unexpectedly explosive cornet work in one break towards the end. By this time, the Happy Six had



Discs of the 1920 period featuring ensembles led by Yerkes are fairly common, but his early solo work is not. The above may be Yerkes' earliest.

become a full-sized band, usually not much different from the S.S. Flotilla Orchestra.

The Hickman Five on records play some worthwhile Dixieland music, a little mellower than the LaRocca group because a saxophone was used instead of clarinet, but Grancy and Pitman produce the goods on "I Wonder Where My Sweet Daddy's Gone?" (HMV B-1269, recorded September 21, 1921). Their sax man, Jack Howard, remained in Europe, and George Fishberg, their pianist, was prominent on the London scene for several years afterwards as George Fisher, leading a small but straight band at the Kit-Cat club, and directing the Rhythm Band on HMV. What happened to Grancy and Pitman is not clear. Grancy is thought to have died in the 1940s, a victim of dope-taking.

The S.S. Flotilla Orchestra toured Australia in 1924, with Bert Worth in its ranks on alto sax. He had been in London with Jack Hylton and the "Queen's Dance Orchestra" (so labelled on its first HMV records in 1921), but after its return—in 1925?—nothing more is known of Yerkes or his bands. He is remembered by Eddie Grossbart as being quite old in 1919. The few photographs of him that exist confirm this. The March 1920 Victor supplement announcing the Jazarimba Orchestra's only Victor disc shows an obviously middle-aged man holding a baton while band members pose in typical "jazz-band-in-action" style around him. Tom Brown remembers Yerkes actually conducting the band at recording sessions.

A faded photograph of the Happy Six in the Columbia catalog for 1922 shows Brown, Nunez and trumpeter Earl Oliver, who can be heard on several of its earliest records. No doubt the Green Brothers—Joe and George—are among the percussionists who play drums, xylophone and marimba on many titles. Yerkes also had a saxophone sextet, modeled on the Six Brown Brothers, and some pleasing sides were made by this sextet for Gennett and Canadian HMV (in Montreal, where in June 1920 a band known as Yerkes Blue Bird Orchestra played for several months, recording some interesting performances for the latter label).

One of the most interesting of the earliest

Yerkes records is Columbia A-2634, on which his American Marimbaphone Band—seemingly two xylophonists, a marimba player and a piano—performs Spencer Williams' lovely "Tishomingo Blues," introducing a number composed by Will Vodrey, "Some Chocolate Drops." Recorded on June 27, 1918, it is charming, original, graceful and melodic.

Does anyone know more about Harry Yerkes himself? This mysteriously famous figure is a major one in the story of early jazz.

Brian Rust adds this in a note to V78J: "Two men named Yerkes, both Americans, have given me a lot of pleasure! By a strange coincidence, the musician's relative, the benevolent American millionaire Charles Tyson Yerkes, came to London about a hundred years ago, saw the awful condition of the slums, and set up the machinery for building homes for the needy in the countryside round London, laying the tracks for the subway system that is used by millions. In particular, he founded the Northern Line that ended (1900) in the little village of Golders Green, now part of Greater London, but still a pleasant place to live. I should know—I was born there in 1922 and still love it."



Brian Rust and Tram—distant cousins? For the connection, see Editor's Comments on page 45.

Early Zon-O-Phones: Thick Discs! -- By David Rocco

Recently I acquired two 7-inch etched "shield" label Zon-O-Phone discs, and they puzzle me. I wish we could turn to a book on Zon-O-Phones the way we can consult Paul Charosh's Berliner Gramophone Records for Berliner information or Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings for early Victors.

For those who know only later green label Zon-O-Phones, a "shield" appears on very early discs made by this company, with the name of Frank Seaman's company—"National Gram-O-Phone Corp."—inside the shield. Some say that early Zon-O-Phone discs were mere Berliner clones. It is true that the Zon-O-Phones I already owned are similar to Berliners. Imagine my surprise when a box arrived in the mail and I pulled out two little Zon-O-Phones almost as thick as Edison Diamond Discs!

These two discs are so early that they are the earlier hand-scribed type, not the slightly later and more common fancy typed label. The record numbers and titles indicate very early 1900 recording dates. Both are sung by one of my favorites, Billy Heins: "Oh, The Irish" (9046) and "I Wouldn't Leave My Home If I Were You" (9049).

Both titles are obscure comic songs though "I Wouldn't Leave My Home" is listed in Charosh's Berliner discography as #01001, recorded by Arthur Collins on February 19, 1900. Both titles were evidently deleted by the time the May 10, 1901 Zon-O-Phone catalog came out. They are not among the ten Heins' performances listed in that catalog.

Two other hand-written Zon-O-Phones in my collection—one by Chas. P. Lowe, the other by Samuel Siegel—are listed in the 1901 catalog. They have a normal thickness. I can only conclude that there was much experimentation during these early days of disc recording (along with litigation). Does anyone else own one of these thick Zon-O-Phones? Did engineers such as Louis P. Valiquet, the inventor responsible for the Zon-O-Phone machine, commit themselves to thick discs for a short period, or are my discs merely freaks among Zon-O-Phones? A good article on Zon-O-Phones is

George Paul's "American Zon-O-Phone Records," published in Antique Phonograph Monthly (Vol. 7, No. 6), but Mr. Paul does not address the issue of thickness. His assertion that Seaman's and Berliner's products were "close look-alikes" suggests he has seen thin discs only.

They sound wonderful if the correct stylus is used—that is, wonderful for 1900. Sound quality is superior to that of Berliners and even a bit better than the sound of Eldridge R. Johnson's discs of 1900, which I stress since Johnson is often praised for technical advances. I have not heard any 1900 "Consolidated" or "Improved" discs made by Johnson (in other words, his earliest discs—made before the word "Victor" appeared on labels) that sound as good as Zon-O-Phones from this same period. Comparing discs in similar condition, I am struck by the better sound of even announcements on these Zon-O-Phones. Victor discs from 1901 start to match the earlier Zon-O-phone sound quality and Victors surpassed that sound by the time 10" discs were issued.

Frank Seaman is not popular among some who have written about the industry's early years. He comes off as opportunistic and manipulative in competing with the Berliner and Victor companies. Nonetheless, as I listen to Zon-O-Phones, I suspect he deserves more credit as a manufacturing pioneer.



A.C. Gilbert and the Bob-O-Link Record

by Allan Sutton

The Bob-O-Link label is a puzzler. Few of these little discs have survived, and at the time that my *Directory of American Disc Record Brands & Manufacturers* went to press, I had only anecdotal reports of the label. Now, thanks especially to label collector Gene Scranton, we have a clearer picture of this brand.

Two errors appeared in the *Directory's* Bob-O-Link listing. First, as far as we now know, Bob-O-Link was not a vertical-cut brand. All specimens seen so far employ a standard lateral cut or, possibly, Emerson's universal cut. Second, the label was not introduced during the World War I period, but several years later.

The A.C. Gilbert Company

Bob-O-Link records and phonographs were the brainchild of A.C. Gilbert, creator of the Erector Set, the Gilbert Chemistry Set, and other popular and enduring toys. Born in Salem, Oregon in 1884, Gilbert parlayed his childhood fascination with magic into a lucrative business while a student at Yale, selling boxes of magic tricks for \$5.00. In 1909 he and John Petrie formed the Mysto Manufacturing Company of New Haven, Connecticut, to market magic sets. Gilbert conceived the Erector Set in 1911, dissolved his partnership with Petrie in 1913; and in 1916 renamed his business the A.C. Gilbert Company.

As a marketer, Gilbert was ahead of his time. In 1913 he became the first American toy manufacturer to advertise regularly in national magazines, and he published a free newsletter for children, *Erector Tips*. Gilbert introduced the Polar Cub, the first inexpensive electric table fan, in 1916, and in time the company diversified into other fields based largely on the merits of Gilbert's small electric motors. In the midst of the phonograph boom of the early 1920s, Gilbert decided to enter the new and lucrative children's record market.

Three Bob-O-Link specimens from the collection of Gene Scranton. *Top*, a blue-label A.C. Gilbert issue, 5 3/4" thin shellac pressing, using mxs. 810-1 and 811-1 from an unknown source. Stampings suggest an early Scranton Button Co. pressing. *Center*, this blue-label Gilbert issues is a 7" pressing, possibly from Emerson masters; label and wax show 7117-2 and 7100-4. *Bottom*, a later 6" red-label laminated La Velle issue showing mxs. 7103-8 and 7105-8 from an unknown source.



Bob-O-Link's Short History

Gilbert first advertised its Bob-O-Link records in 1921, a year that saw unprecedented sales of phonographs and records and a proliferation of new record labels. Children's labels were a still a fairly new concept in 1921, and Gilbert had little competition. Gilbert did not file a trademark application for Bob-O-Link, so the label's exact date of introduction is not known, but the *Talking Machine World* for October 1921 carried an advertisement for a Bob-O-Link phonograph. The accompanying records were packaged in illustrated Bob-O-Link books containing two discs and selling for \$1 per book.

Sales must have been disappointing, and Gilbert's interest in records soon waned. In February 1922, A.C. Gilbert disposed of its Bob-O-Link business to the LaVelle Manufacturing Company, also of New Haven, with brother F.W. Gilbert as president and treasurer. Labels were redesigned to read "La Velle Bob-O-Link," and the company exported machines and records to England. Frank Andrews notes that by February 1923, two models of Bob-O-Link machines and eight record books were available in Great Britain. There is some evidence that LaVelle finally abandoned the line in or around August 1923.

Who Made Bob-O-Link?

Gene Scranton reports several series of Bob-O-Link pressings: (1) A.C. Gilbert 5¾" solid-stock pressings; (2) A.C. Gilbert 7" solid-stock pressings; (3) 6" La Velle laminated pressings. Physical evidence suggests that these are Scranton Button Company pressings, and at least one La Velle issue does indeed show Scranton's telltale ND imprint. In addition, Frank Andrews reports that a green-and-gold-labeled variant was sold in the United Kingdom in the early 1920s.

Master sources are less clear. There are two distinct master groups: an 800 series (5¾") and a 7100 series (6" and 7"), which began at 7100 and ran to at least 7117. Emerson seems a likely suspect as the source of some 7" material, although so far I have found no link to previous standard 7" Emerson releases. Federal, another Scranton affiliate, is also a remote possibility, or the recording could have been contracted to an independent studio.

Thanks to Gene Scranton (Greensburg, PA) for permission to use his photographs and data; to Frank Andrews (Neasden, UK) for information on Bob-O-Link in England; and to Gus Fredericks of the Wolverine Antique Music Society (Silverton, OR) for locating background material on the A.C. Gilbert Company.

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What happened to Paul Southe's *Cubanola Glide*?

Paul Southe's *Cubanola Glide* (Columbia A800; mx. 4324-1) was withdrawn just a month after its release in April 1910, making it one of the rarest Columbia issues of the period. What caused Columbia to take such drastic action? Probably not the performance, which is arguably no better or worse than the Collins & Harlan version that replaced it.

The answer seems to lie in the grooves themselves. I've seen three copies of this rarity over the years, and all display the same defect. Although all three copies are in otherwise excellent condition, they are badly stripped on certain loud passages. There is no other significant wear on these sides, nor on the reverse sides. Apparently, Southe failed to turn away from the horn in his louder moments, and the result was an over-modulated groove. The primitive reproducing equipment of the day simply tore into the offending grooves on the first few playings. Ironically, Southe's earlier Columbia efforts had been somewhat under-recorded.

Columbia wasn't a company to waste a few defective pressings, however. As the illustration shows, they simply dumped the surplus on their client labels.



—A.S.

An Introduction To *The Talking Machine World*

The Talking Machine World (TMW) was founded in 1905 by Edward Lyman Bill as a trade magazine for the talking machine industry. Manufacturers and dealers subscribed to it. If dealers bothered to keep old issues for any time, they probably discarded them when leaving the business. For whatever reason, issues of TMW are not as easy to find as Victor catalogues and supplements, which were originally given away free to record buyers.

By good luck, V78J's editor has borrowed all TMW issues from 1916 to 1929. Each issue is fascinating, describing new developments in the industry as they occurred. Future issues of V78J will have inserts duplicating entire pages of TMW.

EDWARD LYMAN BILL

TMW's founder was known as Colonel E. L. Bill since he had been a colonel in the Dakota Territorial Militia. After serving in the militia, he purchased and edited a music magazine called The Music Trade Review. He undoubtedly started TMW to fill an obvious need in the industry. Colonel Bill was treasurer of the New York State

THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD



Aeolian-Vocalion machine promoted in the June 1919 TMW. Note the Graduola control device.

Commission to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. He wrote several books and was a National Geographic Society member. When he died at the age of 54 on January 1, 1916, the New York Times printed his obituary. TMW's president and treasurer, C. L. Bill, was evidently a relative, as was associate editor Raymond Bill. The April 1919 issue reports one Edward Lyman Bill (son or grandson?) returning from overseas, where he had served "in the field ambulance service" and "as an officer of French field artillery." The article reports, "He has completely recovered from the very severe gassing he underwent at Verdun and has already taken up active duties as a member of The Talking Machine World Staff."

SIZE AND ORIGINAL COST OF TMW

Issues are large, measuring nearly 11 by 15 inches, the paper high quality. Covers used for issues were made of an orange construction paper, today delicate and brittle. Issues from the 1916 era average 100 pages, but by 1920 issues were over 200 pages (April's is 246 pages), which says much about the proliferation of new companies and the industry's growth. Issues loaned to V78J are bound together by year. The books weigh ten pounds each.

The journal was issued on the 15th of each month. The annual subscription was \$1.00 before World War I, \$1.50 after. The subscription rate was low because the many ads really paid for TMW. Ads cost \$5.50 per inch. A full page cost \$150, with discounts for yearly contracts.

INTERESTING ADVERTISEMENTS

Front covers feature full page advertisements of Victor products. The inside cover usually has a full page Sonora Phonograph Company ad. The back cover seems to have been reserved for Thomas A. Edison, Inc. A typical issue contains two full page Victor ads early in the magazine. The New York Talking Machine Company and the Chicago Talking Machine Company, both large Victor dealers, usually had their own full page ads.

Aeolian-Vocalion, Brunswick, Columbia, Pathé, Edison, Emerson, Sonora and others had one to four full page advertisements in each issue. Individual dealers took out advertisements. Otto Heineman's General Phonograph Corporation—maker of motors, tone arms, and Okeh records—paid for splendid full page advertisements on heavy paper and in two-tone colors.

There are ads for carrying cases, horns, mica diaphragms, furniture moving covers, jewel styli, needles, needle cutters, piano rolls, records, record albums, record brushes, record cabinets, repeating mechanisms, spring and electric motors, sheet music. There are ads for different types of reproducers and tone arms. Tone arms advertised are the "universal" type which would play both vertical and lateral cut records. The tone arms were two-piece or molded in sections to avoid the Victor-owned tapered tone arm patent.

New products were announced in articles and often ads in the same or subsequent issue would promote these new products. Cheney Talk-

ing Machines were announced in the April 1918 issue and first advertised in the May 1918 issue. Okeh hill-and-dale discs were announced in May 1918 and advertised in June 1918.

Full page ads for machines are common. Only rarely did companies take out full page ads for individual recording artists, but Okeh evidently realized Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" was a special recording. The October 15, 1920 issue has a full page ad—in color!—announcing Smith's first two Okeh discs. The same issue has an article on Mamie Smith with a photograph. It is a rare instance of a black artist promoted in TMW though Jim Europe's Pathé discs were heavily promoted in 1919. Europe's premature death was noted.

Photographs of unusual window displays of merchandise are accompanied by articles.

Despite Indestructible cylinders being on the market, the only cylinder phonographs and records advertised in post-1916 issues are Edison products. There are numerous ads for off-brands of talking machines, most being upright models. In the late 'teens, usually in November, a directory of manufacturers was included once a year. One will soon be duplicated for V78J readers.

FASCINATING ARTICLES

Each TMW issue had sections devoted to trade developments in parts of the U.S. (examples are San Francisco and Boston) as well as in Canada. A few pages were reserved for the United Kingdom. New dealerships were routinely reported, as were sales reports from different cities and areas, price increases, new models, conventions, dealer meetings.

Each issue has two pages of editorial comments. Material and energy shortages created by World War I were well chronicled, as were new business taxes. There are articles on how the Influenza epidemic affected business, on how firms had trouble finding young men for sales work, on Edison Tone Tests, on ways to develop sales skills.

The comings and goings of artists were reported. When Amelita Galli-Curci's first Victor discs were issued in January 1917, they evidently

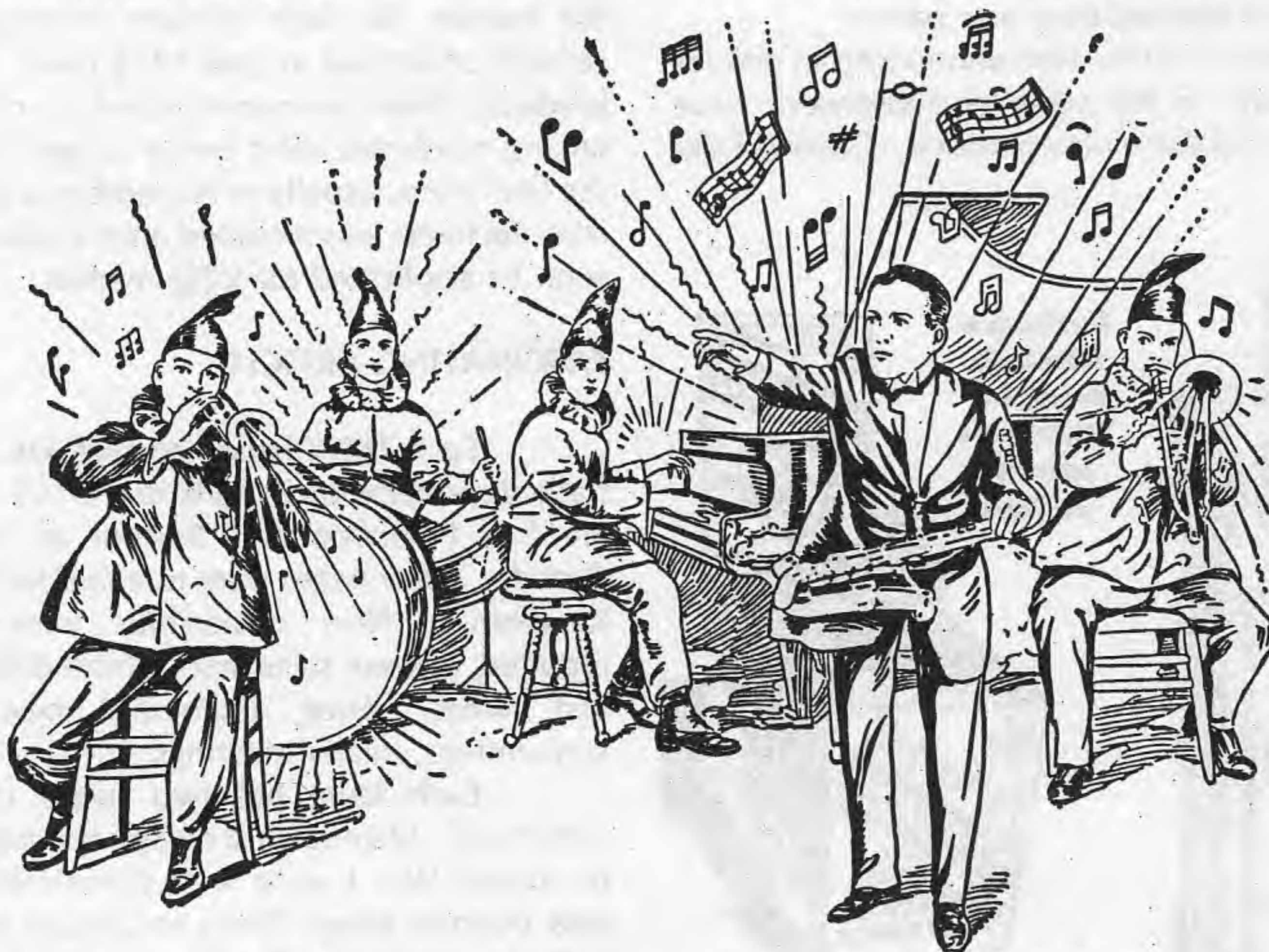


In 1920, ads in TMW promoted Reflexo's polish and restorer product as "perfect" for talking machines—three ounces for 25 cents.

created a sensation. The same issue announced Claudia Muzio as an exclusive Pathé artist. The February 1917 issue has an Ada Jones article. In May 1917 Enrico Caruso described his dread of the recording horn. In December 1917 the Russian violinist Jascha Heifetz was announced as an exclusive Victor artist. Frieda Hempel was introduced as an Edison artist in January 1918. In May 1918 Vocalion records were announced, and Florence Easton is pictured in ads. Eddie Cantor was declared an Emerson artist in January 1920. The deaths of Cal Stewart and Maud Powell were announced in the same issue. Sergei Rachmaninoff recording for Edison was announced in January 1920. When Art Hickman's Orchestra traveled from San Francisco to the East Coast to make "jazz records," it was news. In 1920 TMW reported soprano Yvonne Gall being in a taxi accident.

The July 1920 issue devoted 15 pages to that year's National Association of Talking Machine Jobbers convention held in Atlantic City on June 28, 29, and 30. The Hotel Traymore hosted most events, including Eldridge R. Johnson speaking at a banquet (the "eight famous record artists" entertained). The final social event was at the Hotel Ambassador. Caruso sang. Rachmaninoff performed. Not mentioned in TMW is the hotel band, one that evidently pleased Victor executives that week—namely, Paul Whiteman's band.

In each TMW, two pages describe and illustrate new patents related to machines, records, and recording devices. Next came lists of records to be issued in the following month. These listings of releases—not merely Victor and Columbia but Emerson, Empire, Okeh, Operaphone, Gennett, Vocalion, others—are invaluable.



The above drawing of Ted Lewis is from the November 1920 issue of The Talking Machine World. Around 1920 musicians in various "jazz" bands dressed in clownish outfits. Ted Lewis' men did; Ray Miller's Black and White Melody Boys did; the Six Brown Brothers did. Jazz was associated with humor, funny noises, a good time. The Ted Lewis Jazz Band made appearances in theaters and gave mini-concerts in the stores of Columbia dealers.

Sound-Box Restoration

By David Spanovich

Because I am by nature a "klutz," I feel that if I am able to repair a Victor Sound-Box, almost anyone can.

When repairing the Victor #2 Sound-Box, I begin by assembling all necessary tools and parts: a set of screwdrivers with fine tips, one or two spare mica diaphragms (obtainable from parts suppliers for a few dollars each), one white hollow-tube gasket or one red-colored solid rubber gasket, one tube of clear non-hardening silicone (bathtub) caulk, some matches, candle wax, nail polish remover, Q-tips, and a can of WD-40.

A Victor #2 Sound-Box, similar to the Exhibition, employs a needle-bar, fastened at its top to the mica diaphragm by a small screw and sealed at this joint with a wax-like substance. Toward its mid-section, and directly above the bottom needle socket (the area where the thumb-screw is inserted to hold the needle in place), the needle bar pivots against a knife-edge fulcrum. The needle bar is held in place, against the fulcrum, by a pair of flat springs. The tension of the springs can be adjusted by turning the screws holding them in place. Unless the Sound-Box has obviously been abused, or the knife-edge fulcrum shows signs of corrosion, I leave this assembly alone—at least initially, as I explain later.

The first step, before any screws are removed, is to clean around the tiny screw which holds the mica to the needle bar. Working from the sound box's throat (the large back opening where the tone arm is inserted), I gently swab the area with a Q-tip saturated with a drop or two of nail polish remover until the area appears clean. I then clean the same area working from the front of the diaphragm.

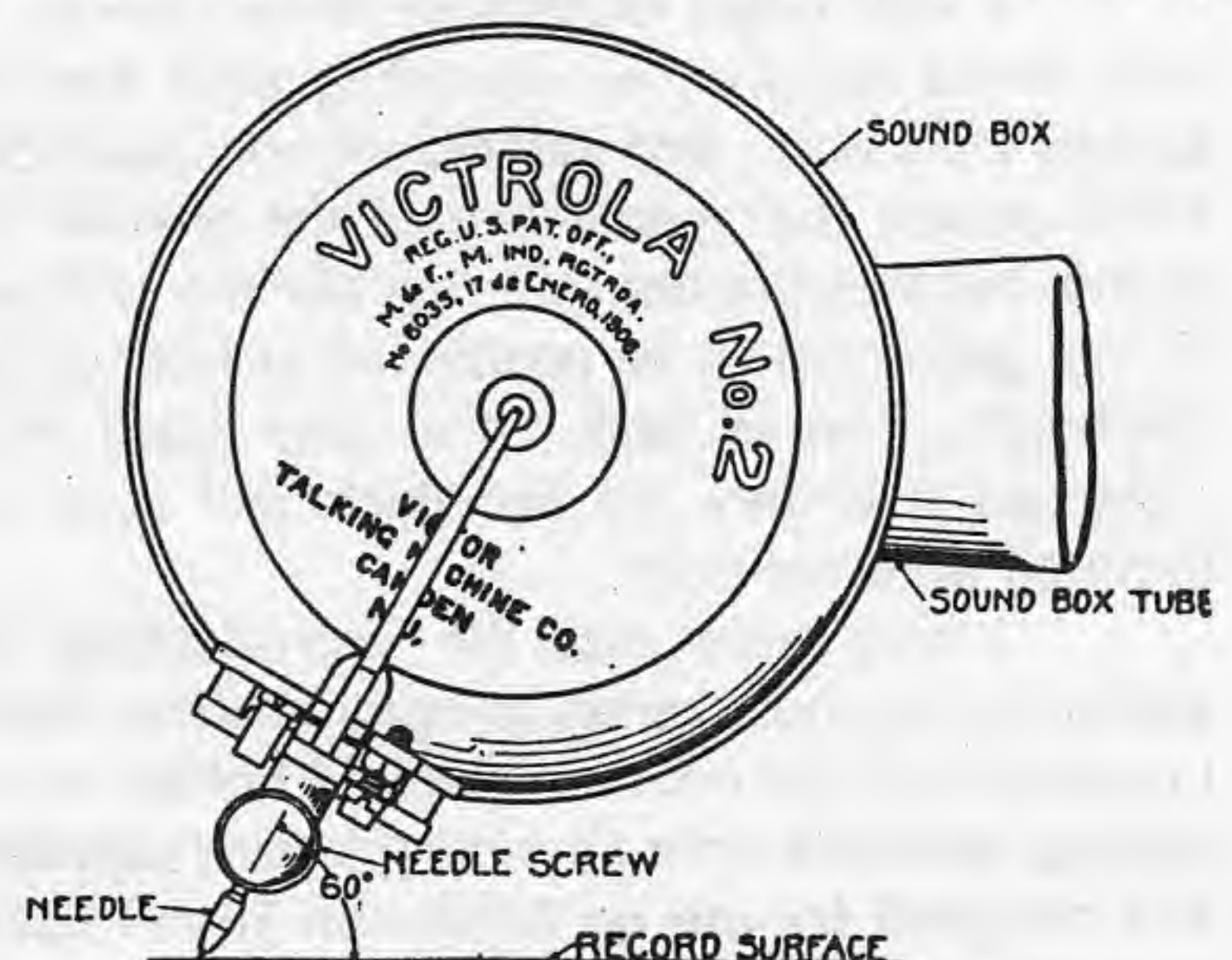
When I'm satisfied that all sealant has been removed, I turn the Sound-Box over and, again working from the throat, remove the microscopic screw that holds the diaphragm to the needle bar, turning it gently counter-clockwise. After this screw has been removed and stowed away, I gently tug on the needle bar to see if it is

stuck to the diaphragm. If it is, I apply more nail polish remover until it is no longer attached.

My second step is to remove the four screws holding the back plate in position. If they seem frozen, I spray the area with WD-40 and wait a few moments before trying again. Once screws are removed, I slowly pry off the back plate, using a thin screw driver as a lever. As the back plate is removed, care must be taken because the diaphragm and gasket are often stuck to it. This is the reason for detaching the needle bar from the diaphragm before any other steps are taken.

Unlike the Exhibition Sound-Box and most other reproducers, the Victor #2 employed a single split-ring gasket. When installed at the factory, the gasket must have been extremely soft and pliable in order for the assembler to stretch the ring around the fragile mica for insertion. Now, of course, the rubber ring is hard and practically molded to the mica. The most difficult challenge of all is removing the mica from the gasket without destroying it.

I wish I could cite an easy procedure for a diaphragm's removal (try a new, single-edged razor blade?), but after mangling at least three mica diaphragms, I can only warn to keep a spare handy.



Victor's new No. 2 Sound-Box graced the cover of *The Voice Of The Victor* in January 1918.

Using a replacement mica diaphragm may be a good idea because the original can then be set aside and stored as an authentic, albeit non-functioning part of the Victrola. It can be preserved in its original state for future generations.

Once the diaphragm is removed, I clean the Sound-Box, removing grit, especially from where the gasket/diaphragm had been positioned. Normally, fragments of ossified rubber will remain attached to the Sound-Box's inside shell or to its back plate. I use nail polish remover for removing fragments, but other solvents may work as well.

Once it is cleaned, I spray the entire Sound-Box, both front and back plate, with WD-40, then wipe dry. Next I insert a needle into the needle bar socket and plunge it back and forth several times in the direction it would move when tracking a record groove. It should take little finger pressure to move the needle bar. If it does not move freely, then the pivot joint, including the knife edge fulcrum and springs, should be sprayed with WD-40.

At this stage, make sure that there is no side-play or movement of the needle bar opposite to the direction required for tracking. If there is, both adjustment screws should be tightened very gradually until the needle bar is held firmly against the knife-edge fulcrum, yet still free to move in the required direction.

I next begin diaphragm re-installation. I have heard many views regarding what type of gaskets work best. Red gaskets are now produced which match the appearance of the original #2 gasket, but they are not split ring like the original, so one gasket has to be positioned in front of the diaphragm, one in back. I've also heard from collectors that they are too thick and must be trimmed to fit correctly.

I have never used the "reproduction" #2 gaskets so I cannot express an opinion about these. I normally use the commonly-found hollow white gaskets, available from phonograph parts suppliers and designed for use on Exhibition Sound-Boxes and others. They look authentic, but they are really much less flexible than original gaskets.

Years ago an antiques dealer showed me

a NOS (new-old stock, or dealer stock) Exhibition Sound-Box that must have been stored in its original container since the time it was manufactured. While portions of the front gasket had dried out, a large area seemed to be in like-new condition. It was extremely soft—more like gum or putty than rubber—and unlike the plastic-like gaskets currently available.

When these new gaskets are used, the movement of the mica diaphragm is far more restricted than it would have been originally, resulting in a shrill or ringing tone. This is especially annoying when loud, acoustic operatic selections are played. I've found through experimentation that softer gaskets give the sound box a softer and far more natural tone—probably much closer to the original performance.

Since exact duplicate gaskets are not now available, some restorers recommend using non-hardening silicone caulk in place of gaskets. The drawback is this can look quite messy unless you are very careful. In any case, silicone looks extremely unauthentic and those concerned about preserving the original appearance of their machines will probably not consider its use. Instead, I recommend using a conventional gasket for the front and silicone caulk for the back.

Hollow white gaskets come in strips, so the first thing I do is wrap the strip around the inner rim of the front portion of the Sound-Box (where the old gasket was positioned) and cut it with a scissors. The gasket should fit tightly, but the ends should not overlap. Next, taking a small dab of clear silicone, I apply a thin coat around the perimeter of the area where the front gasket will be positioned and press the new gasket in place.

I then apply a thin coat of silicone on top of the new gasket and place the diaphragm on top of this, being careful to line up the diaphragm's center hole with the screw hole in the needle bar.

At this point, it should be noted that the needle bar's tension springs may have to be adjusted for the needle bar to just touch the center of the diaphragm without applying pressure to it. Sometimes just a slight turn of one of the screws is all that is needed. Once this is accomplished, and

before the silicone dries, I insert the microscopic screw which fastens the diaphragm to the needle bar and screw it in part of the way. I then put the sound box aside, allowing the silicone to set.

After about an hour, I begin to apply the silicone around the parameter of the back of the diaphragm, being careful not to slop any beyond the area covered by the front gasket, which is visible through the mica. I apply small layers until the overall thickness is about half to three-quarters of that of the front gasket.

Immediately after this is done, I apply a thin coat of silicone to the back outer rim of the Sound-Box (the portion which mates with the back plate), covering the entire area, but being careful not to fill in the small screw holes. I then install the back plate and insert the four screws. The back plate is sealed in this manner to prevent air leakage. A Sound-Box must be completely air tight in order to function properly. Once this is done, I set the Sound-Box aside for at least 24 hours. This will insure that the silicone sets properly.

The final step, which involves sealing the diaphragm/needle bar assembly, must be done with extreme care. Inserting a fine screw driver, I slowly turn the microscopic screw until it is barely tight. If turned too much, the pressure will splinter the center of the diaphragm and all of the work will have to be done over again.

Turning the Sound-Box over and working from the front, I position a tiny granule of candle wax so that it touches the area where the needle bar and diaphragm come together. I then light a match and hold it near the needle bar. After a few seconds, the wax will melt and seal the joint. I immediately remove the match and allow the wax to dry for about a minute. I then check the Sound-Box for air tightness by blowing gently into the throat. If I detect air leakage, I try to find the leak and plug it with a dab of silicone.

The final step involves testing the sound box and making last minute adjustments. Inserting a fresh steel needle, I play a loud, good condition acoustic record—one that I am familiar with. I often use certain Caruso recordings since they show up any faults right away. There should be absolutely no blasting or buzzing. There should

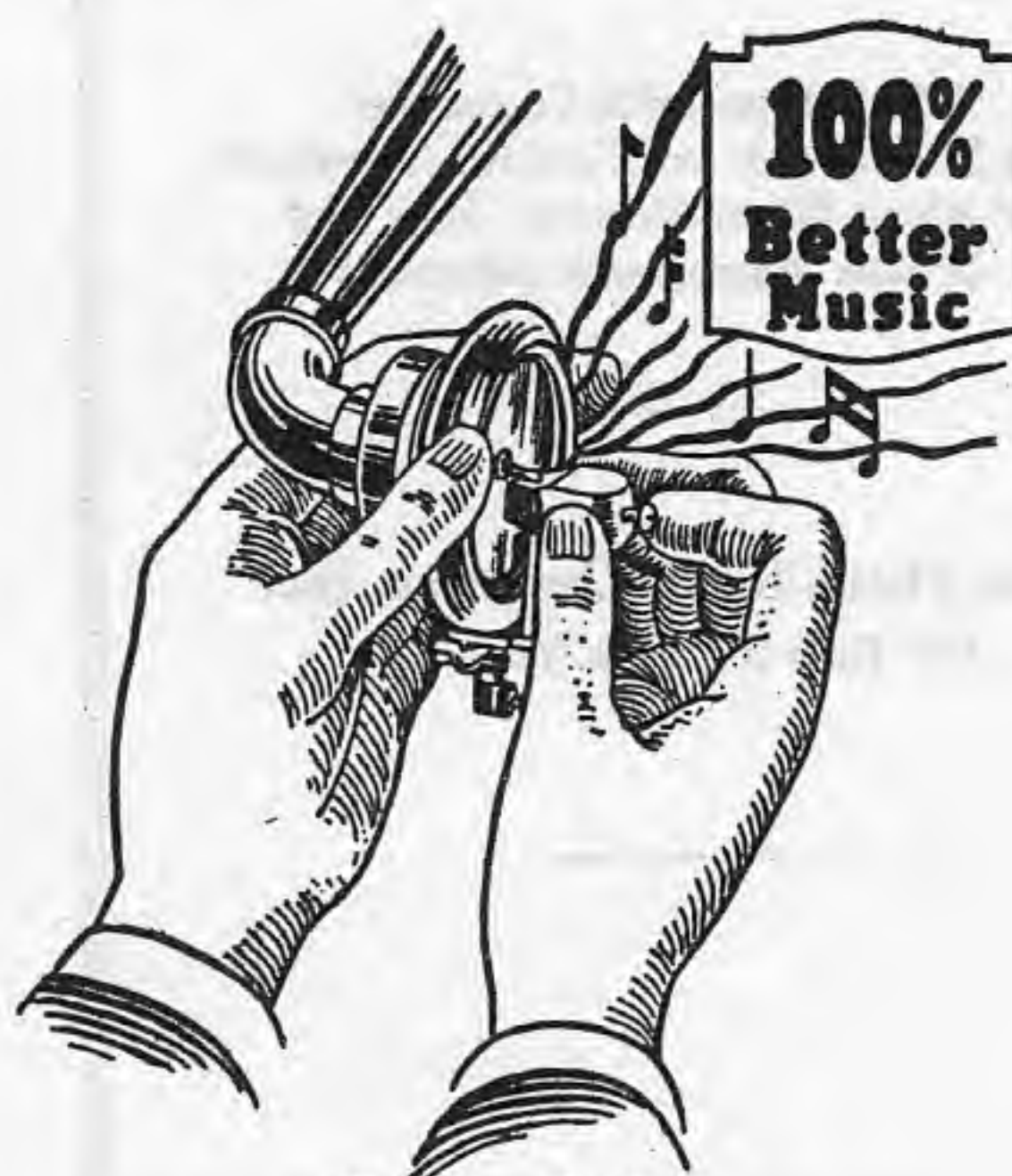
be no noises except those generated by the record itself. In most cases, I've found that no further adjustment is necessary.

If the tone seems shrill, I loosen both needle bar fulcrum screws slightly (about a quarter-turn) and play the record again. Sometimes loosening or tightening just one of the screws will do the job. The needle bar should never exert pressure on the diaphragm nor should it pull.

The sound quality of a well-restored #2 or Exhibition Sound-Box is hard to describe. I will say that the music seems to come alive. Even smaller tabletop Victrolas produce a clear, room-filling volume of sound. If your Victrola squeaks and squawks, you owe it to yourself to fix your Sound-Box.

The above described repair method is not something I developed by myself. Because antique phonograph collecting is an interactive hobby, many have contributed to my understanding of Sound-Box repair.

I recently read an article about Sound-Box restoration in the August 15, 1916 issue of The Talking Machine World. It provides the same basic repair tips. Methods that I developed for my own reproducers—learning from others and discovering things for myself—are the methods used seven decades ago.



(Patent pending)

The Universal Tone Modifier

Sample sent on receipt of \$1.00

TALKING MACHINE WORLD

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POPULAR AMERICAN RECORDING PIONEERS: 1895-1925

BY TIM GRACYK AND FRANK HOFFMANN

As co-authors, we are happy to announce our progress on an encyclopedia that has information on 200 American artists who recorded popular music during the industry's acoustic era. Most entries have been written and we are now refining these rough drafts. A dozen sample entries are on the World Wide Web (<http://www.garlic.com/~tgracyk>), and more will be added in coming weeks.

The encyclopedia will be published in 1997 by Haworth. Entries will also be published in coming issues of *Victrola* and *78 Journal*. Eager to produce a reference work of lasting value, we ask for support and encouragement from *V78J* readers. After seeing entries in *V78J*, please send

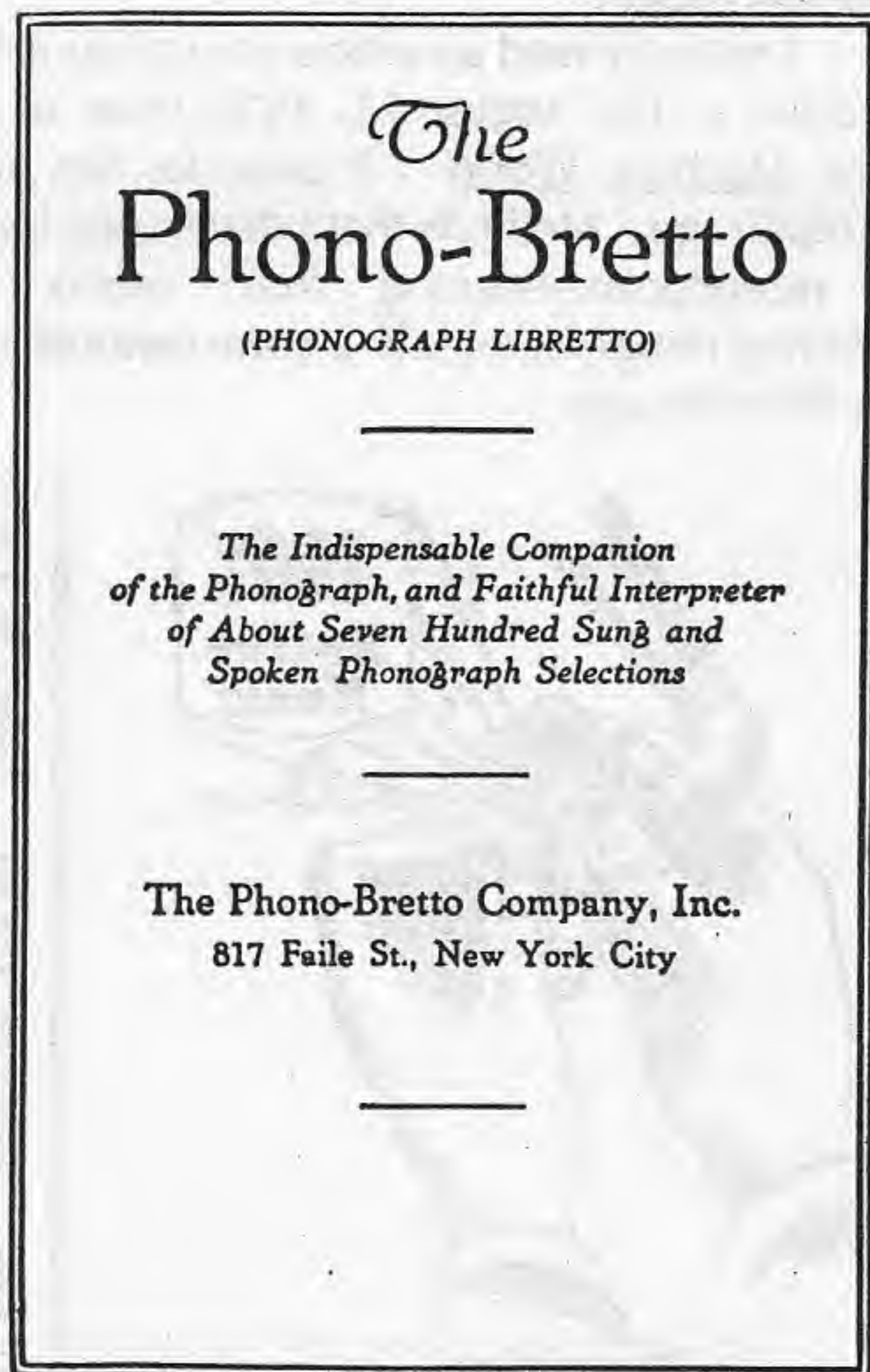
suggestions, corrections, additional information.

If one person can be said to be the inspiration for this project, it is the late Jim Walsh (1910-1990). One goal is to preserve in book form the information that Jim Walsh once presented in *Hobbies* from January 1942 to May 1985 as well as in other publications, such as *Music Lover's Guide*. Walsh's research should be readily available to the collecting community. Young collectors have discovered that issues of *Hobbies* are hard to find. Even if one finds a library with back issues, duplicating all of Walsh's articles is neither cheap nor easy. Yet much information on recording pioneers is found only in *Hobbies*.

We cite Walsh's work frequently since his articles are remarkably perceptive and reliable. Walsh made occasional errors, as we now know because of information available only in recent years, but Walsh's mistakes were rarely serious. Errors were often the result of former recording artists mis-remembering events of decades earlier.

When writing entries, we listen carefully to recordings in our collections as well as to cassettes sent by friends who own rare cylinders and discs. We often consult these valuable published works:

- 1) *Berliner Gramophone Records: American Issues, 1892-1900* by Paul Charosh
- 2) *Edison Cylinder Records 1889-1912* by Allen Koenigsberg
- 3) Brian Rust's various discographies
- 4) Allan Sutton's *A Guide to Pseudonyms on American Records*
- 5) Fagan and Moran's *The Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings*
- 6) *Edison Disc Artists & Records 1910-1929* by Ron Dethlefsen and Ray Wile
- 7) Ron Dethlefsen's *Edison Blue Amberol Recordings, Volumes I and II*
- 8) *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* as reprinted by Wendell Moore



Neil Maken has helped by loaning this rare book.

We cite articles published in Martin Bryan's *New Amberola Graphic* and Allen Koenigsberg's *Antique Phonograph Monthly*. *The Talking Machine World* and *Variety* are valuable sources.

At some point every collector comes across something unusual—a special record, rare promotional literature, an old newspaper article—that should be known among collectors. We hope some V78J readers send to us xeroxed copies of rare printed material and cassettes of special recordings. Proper credit will be given for information supplied. Please send materials to *Victrola and 78 Journal*. If readers have company catalogs or supplements for sale, please drop V78J a line.

Edison invented the phonograph in 1877 but wide distribution of commercial recordings did not begin immediately. The encyclopedia will cover artists who had recording careers between the mid-1890s and 1925. The 1925 cut-off date is the year in which the large companies adopted the microphone for the new electric recording process.

In the case of artists who enjoyed success during both the acoustic and electric eras, we will not include those who enjoyed far greater success during the electric era. Marion Harris made acoustic and electric recordings, but she was more important as an acoustic recording artist, so she has an entry. In fact, the Harris article in this issue of V78J will be modified for the encyclopedia. Gene Austin made some acoustic recordings, but he will not be among the 200 artists covered. He was far more successful in the Orthophonic era.

Our book will cover American artists best known for recording "popular" material, not artists who were primarily European entertainers nor artists best known as classical performers. Sir Harry Lauder, despite his popularity in America, will not have an entry, but the encyclopedia's long bibliography will show that Lauder is well served by a bio-discography written by Darrell Baker and Larry F. Kiner. John McCormack is an example of a classically-trained artist who often sang popular works. The singer is discussed in various books and will not have an entry in ours.

The encyclopedia will cover artists who recorded Tin Pan Alley numbers, Broadway show

tunes, ragtime numbers, "coon" songs, novelty numbers, quartet arrangements, early "jass," dance music. We hope to give information on popular artists usually overlooked in reference books. Artists who are well-represented in jazz and blues books—Fletcher Henderson, King Oliver, Mamie Smith, Ma Rainey—will not have entries.

Obviously not every artist of the acoustic era can be included. In limiting the encyclopedia to 200 artists, we work with an arbitrary but manageable number of entries. We cannot guarantee that your favorite acoustic artist will have an entry, but you increase the likelihood if you send materials on that artist! Please let us know if you are interested in writing a signed entry, collaborating on entries, or reviewing finished entries. We have already received help from experts and especially appreciate suggestions and corrections made by Quentin Riggs, David Rocco, Joe Wakeman, and Ron Dethlefsen. All assistance will be dully acknowledged in our book. The editors take responsibility for any errors.

If the first edition is well received, we will expand the encyclopedia in coming years so it is more inclusive, covering 300 to 500 artists of the acoustic era.



Our long entry on Billy Golden is already on the World Wide Web (<http://www.garlic.com/~tgracyk>). We invite comments so entries can be revised, improved, expanded.

Collins and Harlan

From THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POPULAR AMERICAN RECORDING PIONEERS: 1895-1925

By Tim Gracyk and Frank Hoffmann

NOTE: The encyclopedia will have separate entries on Arthur Collins as well as Byron G. Harlan. They did important work as solo artists.

The team of Collins and Harlan was the most successful duo of the acoustic era. Jim Walsh states in the December 1942 issue of *Hobbies*, "Together they constituted what was probably the most popular team of comedians in the history of the phonograph. Only Billy Jones and Ernest Hare, who came along many years later, might have been able, at the height of their careers, to dispute the claim."

Although Collins and Harlan came to be largely identified with Negro dialect work, they were not limited to this. They sang comic songs in various dialects, performed rube skits, and recorded songs satirizing trends of the day.

THE EARLY YEARS

Before teaming with Byron G. Harlan, Collins had a partner in tenor Joe Natus for a year. Collins and Natus made 19 Edison cylinders in 1901-1902 and several Victor recordings. Around this time Collins sang in an Edison ensemble called the Big Four Quartet, which recorded five titles issued in 1901. Harlan was one of the quartet's tenors; Natus was the other; A.D. Madeira was bass. It is possible that Collins and Harlan first sang together as members of this Edison quartet.

The first time Arthur Collins was paired with Byron G. Harlan for a Victor recording session was on October 31, 1902. This was Harlan's first Victor recording session. Collins and Harlan recorded five titles, including "The First Rehearsal of the Huskin' Bee" (1723), a rube skit. Many of their early recordings are "rube" sketches with songs, such as "Closing Time in a Country

Grocery" (Victor 1728) and "Two Rubes in a Tavern" (1727), and they continued recording rural comedy for years, Harlan performing it into the 1920s. Harlan recorded these same three titles with Frank C. Stanley, who wrote the sketches.

Collins and Harlan were again paired a day later, on November 1. A session held March 3, 1903 is noteworthy since Collins first recorded duets with Natus (if issued, they are very rare), then recorded with Harlan. It was the last Victor session for the team of Collins and Natus. Natus made Victor discs for another two years but only solo recordings, mostly of popular ballads. Natus' last Victor session was on April 28, 1905.

Collins and Harlan's first Edison cylinder may be "Troubles of the Reuben and the Maid," issued as 8239 in December 1902. They recorded many "rube" skits for Edison. "Way Back" (9803), issued in February 1908, is about an Uncle Josh visit to New York. It was made for Edison when Cal Stewart recorded exclusively for Columbia.

COLLINS, HARLAN, AND MORSE

In 1903 Collins and Harlan recorded "Hurrah for Baffin Bay," issued as a Victor DeLuxe disc and as Edison 8447. Composed by Theodore Morse, it was in the Broadway musical *The Wizard of Oz*. The duo would have close ties with Morse, often recording his compositions. In the World War I period they even performed at concerts with Morse accompanying on piano. The April 1957 issue of *Hobbies* duplicates a photograph of Morse standing on a stage with Collins, Harlan, and other Victor artists who gave a concert in April 1917 in

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Walsh reports in the December 1968 issue of Hobbies that the duo sang "what may have been the last Victor Monarch record to have a spoken announcement...It was 2451, and the title was 'It Was The Dutch.'" This Theodore Morse song was recorded on September 11, 1903, with Collins doing the announcement. The next four Victor numbers, 2452 through 2455, were Billy Murray's first Victor discs and are unannounced.

On July 29, 1907, Collins and Harlan recorded for Victor a Morse song titled "In Monkey Land" (5270), and their Edison recording of the same number (Edison 9700) was issued in October, 1907. The song begins:

*Where breezes blow in monkeyland
Up in a banyan tree
There lived a pretty monkey maid
Loved by a chimpanzee*

Their recordings of Morse's "Down In Jungle Town" in 1908 sold very well (issued as Edison 9941 in July 1908; issued as Victor 16805). The popularity of "In Monkey Land" and "Down In Jungle Town" helped create a brief craze by 1910 for "monkey" tunes, with labels referring to "jungle" songs. In 1903 Morse had composed "Up In A Coconut Tree," sung by Billy Murray, but it was not as popular as later "jungle" tunes. Similar songs recorded by Collins and Harlan include Morse's "The Family Tree" (Victor 5361), George Meyer's "Underneath the Monkey Moon" (Edison 10367), Morse's "Down in Monkeyville" (Victor 17501; Edison Blue Amberol 2141), Morse's "On A Monkey Honeymoon" (Victor 16426), Morse's "The Jungle of Jungle Joe" (Columbia A967), and Dempsey and Schmid's "Moonlight In Jungle Land" (Victor 16483). As late as 1914 the duo had a hit about chimps with "The Aba Daba Honeymoon," music by Morse, words by a young Arthur Fields.

An important Victor session took place on May 9, 1905. As a team, Collins and Harlan recorded numbers that were popular—"Tammany" (S.H. Dudley, as "Frank Kernell," recorded this as a baritone solo for Victor) as well as "Take A Car"—

and each singer made solo records, with Collins recording the incredibly successful "The Preacher and the Bear" (4431). Another performance from 1905 that proved durable was Paul Dresser's "Nigger Loves His 'Possum," first recorded on November 7, 1905. Issued as Victor Grand Prize 4560, it remained available for over two decades. (Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings indicates Collins and Harlan recorded it again on January 27, 1922, but this may be an error since Collins was at the time recovering from a late 1921 accident. Also, Victor had dropped the duo in 1918.)

Around 1906 Collins and Harlan joined Billy Murray and Steve Porter to form the Rambler Minstrel Company. This recording team performed at New York social events such as club dinners.

THEIR MIDDLE PERIOD: 1906-1916

Comic patter is exchanged in many Collins and Harlan recordings, with Collins often addressed as "Henry" or "Sam" and Harlan called "Mandy." Collins' voice is usually the first heard on a Collins and Harlan recording. It was typical in tenor-baritone duets for the baritone to lead.



Before teaming with Harlan in 1902, Arthur Collins had a partner briefly in tenor Joe Natus.



On rare occasions they harmonize from the beginning. The team is generally identified on labels as "Collins and Harlan" though an exception is the Columbia disc featuring their "On The Good Ship Whip-Poor-Will" (A1850), which cites Harlan first: "Byron G. Harlan and Arthur Collins."

Jim Walsh suggests in Ron Dethlefsen's Edison Blue Amberol Recordings 1915-1929 that Collins viewed his own contribution as more important to the duo's success than Harlan's. Billy Murray had reported to Walsh, "Do you know that after Collins and Harlan had worked together for years and years, poor Harlan found out that Collins was trying to double-cross him by going to managers of the different recording sessions and insisting that, instead of the fees for making duets being divided equally between them, he should get two dollars to Harlan's one. Collins argued that he was 'the strong man of the team' who made their records sell and should be paid accordingly."

The duo's first four-minute cylinders were "Don't Go Away" and "Nigger Loves His Possum," made available on October 1, 1908 when Edison's four-minute wax Amberol cylinder made its debut. The two minute version of Paul Dresser's "Nigger Loves His Possum" had proved so popular that Collins and Harlan sang it as one of their first four-minute Amberols. Edison literature states, "[It is] Considered by many to be Collins and Harlan's best duet. This 'classic' could not possibly have left off the first list of Four-Minute Records."

Collins with Harlan, always free-lance artists, were steadily engaged by record companies for over two decades. When the duo found a song well-suited for their talents, they would sing it for Victor, then Columbia, then Edison—or in some other order—and then perhaps for Emerson, Pathé, others. Titles closely associated with the duo include Yellen and Cobb's "Alabama Jubilee,"

Fields and Morse's "Auntie Skinner's Chicken Dinner," Dumont's "Bake Dat Chicken Pie," Fields and Donovan's "The Aba Daba Honeymoon," and Piantadosi's "Melinda's Wedding Day."

They were not limited to "darky" duets, as some labels worded such songs. They sang comic songs in various dialects, such as Italian in "My Brudda Sylvest" (Edison 10013, 1908). "The Old Grey Mare" and "My Wife's Gone To The Country" are devoid of racial or ethnic stereotypes. Other examples are "Do The Funny Fox Trot" (Victor 17649; Columbia A1626), which satirizes the dance craze inspired by Irene and Vernon Castle, and "The Kid Is Clever" (18014), which satirizes vaudeville.

Collins and Harlan were very successful with Irving Berlin compositions, including "That Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tune" (Berlin's first big hit), "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Snookey Ook-ums," "Everybody's Doing It Now," "When That Midnight Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam'," "Down in Chattanooga," and "That International Rag." A year before recording "Alexander's Ragtime Band," the duo recorded for Columbia a Berlin song titled "Alexander And His Clarinet" (A831).



Many Collins and Harlan numbers employ stereotypes that are offensive, but the team also helped popularize notable works by African-American composers, such as Cole and Johnson.

One indication of the duo's value to the Edison Company in 1912 is that the first numbered Diamond Disc is Collins and Harlan's "Moonlight In Jungleland," backed by Collins' "Below The Mason-Dixon Line." Numbered 50001, it is the beginning of the Diamond Disc popular series.

Both singers remained in demand as solo artists. On Collins' "That Baseball Rag" (Victor 17377), Harlan makes an uncredited contribution in shouting the line, "You run like an ice wagon."

The duo's output was interrupted in 1911 when Harlan suffered from typhoid fever and pneumonia. During Harlan's recovery, Collins recorded solo for Victor and teamed with tenor Albert Campbell for Zon-O-Phone and Columbia discs. An example of a Collins and Campbell duet is "In Ragtime Land" (Columbia A1098).

Collins and Harlan sang before audiences as part of a touring ensemble formed in late 1916 or early 1917. The May 15, 1917 issue of Talking Machine World reports on a "new singing act now touring the Eastern States and featuring the well-known record makers, Billy Murray, Henry Burr, the Sterling Trio, Peerless Quartet, Collins & Harlan, with Theodore Morse as pianist." The group is called The Phonograph Singers. Later issues of Talking Machine World, which featured full page ads of the group, used other names. What had started as The Phonograph Singers evolved into the Popular Talking Machine Artists, the Popular Record Makers, the Peerless Record Makers (the name used in mid-1919 when Collins and Harlan left), the Eight Popular Victor Artists, finally the Eight Famous Victor Artists.

COLLINS AND HARLAN--AND "JASS"

On December 1, 1916, they recorded the earliest song on disc known to refer to the new music called jazz, or "jas." For the Edison company they recorded various takes of "That Funny Jas Band From Dixieland." The lyrics by Gus Kahn and music by Henry I. Marshall were copyrighted on November 8, 1916:

Howdy Sal--glad to see you honey

*Hello gal--got a roll of money
Don't be late on our way [to]
Some cafe with lots of pep and ginger
There's a place
You'll go wild about its dancing space
Wouldn't be without it
But if you go you'll stay alone
Just to hear the jas band play!*

CHORUS: *Oh honey dear
I want you to hear
That harmony queer
When you listen to
Mad musicians playing rhythm
Everybody dancing with 'em!
Oh, hold me close in your arms
I'm in love with your charm and
The funny jas band from dixieland*

This appeared first in April, 1917 as Blue Amberol dubbing 3140. It appeared as Diamond Disc 50423 in July 1917. The dubbed recording appeared first because Blue Amberols could be processed more quickly than Diamond Discs. The duo recorded the song for Victor on January 12, 1917, and since Victor manufactured discs more quickly than Edison manufactured either Blue Amberols or Diamond Discs, it was also available to the public in April, 1917. It is Victor 18235.

This satire of jazz was issued before the first jazz record was issued. Collins recorded it as a solo number for three companies--Pathé (20143, issued in May 1917), Operaphone (1936, issued in May 1917), and Empire (6250, issued in December 1918, two years after the song was recorded for Edison). The first time Victor literature refers to this new music ("jas") is in the April 1917 monthly supplement announcing the new Collins and Harlan disc. Victor announced the first jazz record by the Original Dixieland Jass Band (18255) in its May supplement.

Collins as a solo artist recorded a few songs about jazz--Harlan never did. An example is Chris Smith's "Get A Jazz Band To Jazz The Yankee Doodle Tune" for Emerson 7222, issued in October 1917. Collins recorded Brockman's "Eph-

raham's Jasbo Band" for Paroquette (84, issued April 1917) and Emerson (7140, issued May 1917). "Keep Jazzin' It, Ras" was issued as Emerson 7385 in September 1918. "Old Man Jazz" was issued as Blue Amberol 4093 in October 1920.

The duo recorded "Everybody's Jazzin' It" for Victor (18303; issued September 1917). Whereas earlier they sang about ragtime, the duo now sang about jazz. Their version of "Every Day's A Holiday in Dixie" (Emerson 9125) is characterized as a "Southern Jazz Melody" on the label.

For small companies Collins often recorded songs that he had earlier recorded with Harlan for major labels. An example is Collins singing "Alabama Jubilee" for Domestic. Harlan, as solo artist, never recorded numbers associated with the team Collins and Harlan.

Pseudonyms were evidently not used for the duo. Collins as a solo artist never used one though Harlan as solo artist was occasionally issued under a pseudonym—Cyrus Pippins, Deacon Treadway, Bert Terry, others.

DECLINE IN POPULARITY: LATE TEENS

Collins and Harlan's decline in popularity around 1918 was abrupt. They recorded for nearly every company—but no longer for the two largest companies, Victor and Columbia. Their form of delivery, so familiar to record buyers, perhaps had become dated, made all the more noticeable by many young singers making their recording debuts around this time. Popular music also changed during World War I though the duo tried to adjust to these changes, covering material that reflected popular trends, including Hawaiian numbers. But they also recorded material of earlier times, such as coon duets and rube numbers.

Victor and Columbia stopped recording Collins and Harlan at some point in 1918, with the last of the duo's recordings for these two companies issued in October. The two continued touring into 1919 with the Popular Record Makers. The Talking Machine World indicates Collins and Harlan remained in the touring group until at least May 1919. Collins did not record with the Peer-

less Quartet as late as this.

It is unknown why the two largest companies stopped recording Collins and Harlan. The fact that the duo did Edison tone tests is probably not a reason since that came a full year after Victor and Columbia dropped them. It is more likely that the duo agreed to promote Edison discs because the other companies had lost interest in them. We cannot know for certain unless contracts or letters surface. In any case, Victor and Columbia looked to younger artists—Al Bernard, Ernest Hare, Van and Schenck—to record material well-suited for the talents of Collins and Harlan.

Curiously, the 1921 Columbia catalog states about the duo, "Their work is in its particular way quite unique and inimitable and a Columbia monthly list without at least one record by them would seem incomplete." No Columbia monthly list had included a new Collins and Harlan title for some time when this catalog was printed around September 1920.

Their last Victor disc as well as the last Columbia featured "When Uncle Joe Steps Into France" (Victor 18492; Columbia A2599):

*When Uncle Joe steps into France
With his ragtime band from Dixieland
See the soldiers swaying
When Uncle Joe starts playing
A raggy ditty, so sweet and pretty.
When they play "The Memphis Blues"
They will use a lot of shoes
And fill them full of darky gin.
They'll rag their way right to Berlin
When Uncle Joe steps into France
With his ragtime regiment band*

Victor issued it as a "B" side, with the "A" side featuring one of Victor's new and young singers, Marion Harris. The duet seems an up-to-date number in that it refers to the European conflict, but it is largely a sequel to a song popularized by Collins years earlier, "When Uncle Joe Plays A Rag On His Old Banjo" (Victor 17118), which probably also inspired a 1916 song popularized by the Peerless Quartet (with Collins) titled "When Old

Bill Baily Plays the Ukelele."

About "Uncle Joe Steps Into France," the October 1918 Victor supplement states, "The Jazzing in the accompaniment is entirely in the spirit of the words." Music is by Billy Winkle, words by Bernie Grossman. It was issued in the same month Columbia issued its last Byron G. Harlan solo disc, "Bobby The Bomber" (A2587). Another World War I song recorded by the duo is titled "Big Chief Kill A Hun," evidently a sequel to the popular "Indianola." It was issued as Okeh 1113 in December 1918—after the Armistice.

Collins and Harlan in these years—roughly 1917 to 1919—recorded regularly for small companies then emerging, including Domestic, Okeh, Emerson, Empire, Paramount, Operaphone, Gennett. Songs from this period recorded for more than one company include "Everything Is Hunky Dory Down in Honky Tonky Town," "Three Pickaninnies," "Everything Is Peaches Down in Georgia," "Down In Jungle Land," "There's A Lump Of Sugar In Dixie," "Good-bye Alexander."

When Paramount issued its first discs in early 1918 (eight-inch vertical cut), Collins and

Harlan were among its artists. Their rendition of "Everybody's Crazy 'Bout the Dog Gone Blues" was issued in April as Paramount 2049. The duo was included in the first Okeh catalog, issued in October 1918. As a solo artist for Paramount and Okeh, Collins recorded some Bert Williams material, in keeping with the public's association of Collins with "darky" humor.

The duo recorded often for Pathé. Their version of Von Tilzer's "Stop, Look, Listen To The Music Of The Band" (20463) is backed by a Noble Sissle performance—a curious coupling. Pathé issued "I Want A Jazzy Kiss" (22382) in July 1920 (the Edison version, Blue Amberol 4133, appeared in December, with Diamond Disc 50940 following in 1922). Backed by the Van Eps Banjo Orchestra, Collins (without Harlan) often sang for Pathé,

Also from the late 'teens are "Sipping Cider Thru A Straw," issued on Operaphone in September 1919, and "Thipping Thider Thru a Thraw," the same song with a more comical spelling, issued on seven-inch Emerson 7536 in October. "Bake Dat Chicken Pie" was issued in March 1920 as Lyric 5215, backed by "Coon Loves His Possum." In September 1920, Okeh issued the duo singing "Way Down Barcelona Way" (4132). In October 1920, Gennett issued a lateral-cut disc of the duo singing this (9069).

FINAL YEARS WITH EDISON

In 1919 the duo signed an Edison contract, agreeing to travel widely and conduct "tone tests," which were programs put on to demonstrate publicly that the company's Diamond Discs "re-created their voices with literal fidelity and in a way that baffles the keenest ear in the effort to detect the voice from the Edison record." The earliest reference in The Talking Machine World to Collins and Harlan on a tone test tour is in the November 15, 1919 issue. A photograph shows the two standing in front of Thomas Edison's birthplace in Milan, Ohio.

Discs issued in late 1920 by other companies suggest the two were not signed as exclusive Edison artists. In any case, the two had been



Collins and Harlan were issued on vertical-cut Paramounts in early 1918. The above song is a reworking of "Auntie Skinner's Chicken Dinner," also by Theodore Morse and Arthur Fields.

important to the Edison Company from the beginning of the duo's formation in 1902, and they were ending their career with Edison. Their last recordings would be made for Edison in 1924 although as a solo artist Harlan recorded periodically in the 1920s for other labels.

The team's career--and Collins' life--almost came to a premature end on October 20, 1921 during a tone test demonstration at the Princess Theater in Medina, Ohio. Exiting the stage in the dark, the baritone fell through a trap-door accidentally left open. Harlan recorded four Uncle Josh skits for Brunswick during Collins' recovery from the Ohio accident. By mid-1923 Collins had sufficiently recovered to leave his home and join Harlan for a long tour of the West.

Collins and Harlan records continued to be released by Edison until late 1924. The last Collins and Harlan disc is Diamond Disc 51423, "Any Way The Wind Blows (My Sweetie Goes)" backed by "Liver and Bacon." These were not issued as Blue Amberols.

Their recording career as a duo was over by the advent of electrical recordings though Ron Dethlefsen reports that Harlan made experimental unissued recordings for the Edison Company on

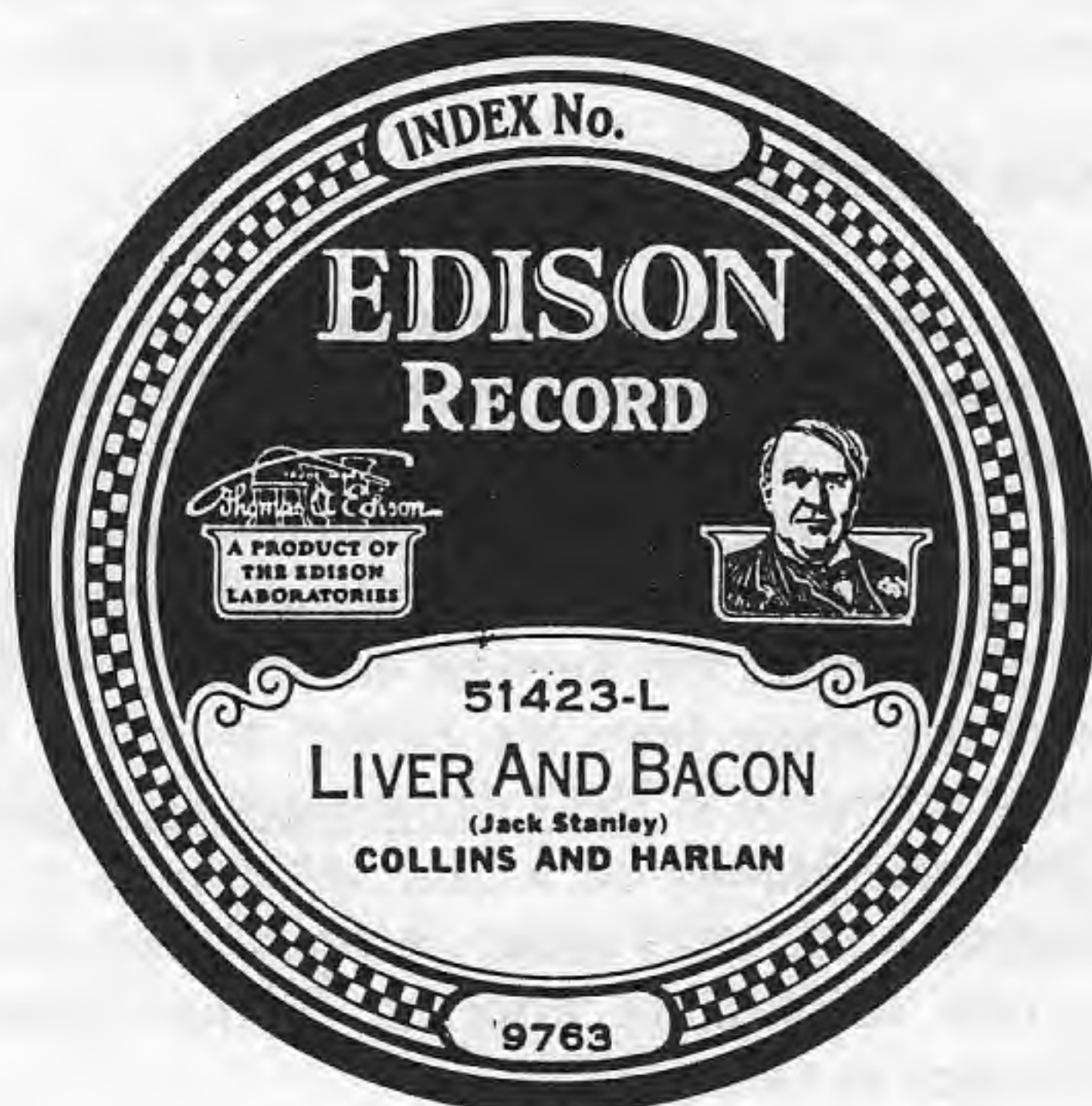
October 18, 1926. These were probably electrical. Martin Fisher reports that Harlan is on electrical Grey Gull 4255 with Harlan E. Knight and Steve Porter. They perform "Greetings in Bingville." The three had recorded the sketch for Columbia a decade earlier (A1838).

RADIO WORK AND DEATHS

Ron Dethlefsen discovered in the Henry Ford Museum a letter dated January 18, 1926 that suggests Collins and Harlan did some radio work in the 1920s. Arthur Collins writes to Thomas Edison, "I take the liberty of writing to you, to ask if you think Mr. Ford would be interested in, or could use Mr Harlan and myself in his Broadcasting Programme each week. It occurred to us that he being an exponent of Old Time and clean dancing, might look with favor on singing songs of the same type. We are very desirous of affiliating with some good concern, and knew that a word from you would help us in this new field. While we were on tour for you, our Broadcasting in the West met with a great deal of success, and with excellent criticisms everywhere. We hope you are enjoying the best of health..."

Collins signed the letter and added "Always Edison Artists." Collins' address at the time was 362 Washington St., Hempstead, Long Island, New York. Harlan lived in West Orange, as did Thomas Edison. Clearly the duo was eager to continue working, but it is unknown if anything came from this request to Edison to help them secure radio--or "Broadcasting"-- work.

Collins later in 1926 retired to Tice, Florida, the two partners now separated by many miles. Walsh reports that the singer was independently wealthy by this time, Collins' wife having made wise investments over the years. His voice remained strong despite a weak heart, and Collins sometimes sang at Masonic meetings in the Ft. Myers area. He died on August 3, 1933. Harlan lost his savings during the Depression. Walsh writes in the March 1943 issue of Hobbies, "On September 11, 1936, Mr. Harlan died of a heart attack in the bath-tub at his home in Orange."



The final Collins and Harlan disc--issued in 1924.

Billy Murray: The Early Years

By Frank Hoffmann

*An Excerpt from The Billy Murray Biography,
by Frank Hoffmann, Dick Carty, and Quentin Riggs*

Billy Murray, in his words, "squalled for the first time" in Philadelphia, on May 25, 1877. The phrase appears in the Edison Phonograph Monthly (January 1917) in an article attributed to Murray and appropriately titled "My Twin--The Phonograph," the only written account from Murray close to an autobiographical sketch. He points out that he was born in the year Edison invented the phonograph.

Murray's parents, Patrick Murray and Julia Kelleher Murray, had emigrated from County Kerry, Ireland. They were part of century-old movement of the Irish to the new continent. Patrick Murray, born in 1849, and Julia both appear to have migrated to the United States as young adults. The Passenger and Immigration Lists Index has recorded approximately a dozen men named "Patrick Murray" who took the Aliens' Declaration of Intention and/or Oath of Allegiance in the various Philadelphia-based state and federal courts between 1849 and 1877. One entry cites a Patrick Murray in 1869. This may be the singer's father at age 20 but we cannot know for certain. The newly arrived Irish emigrant may have spent time in another U.S. locale--say, New York--prior to settling in Philadelphia.

Billy Murray may have been born in the home instead of in a hospital. Larry Kapson, a Murray enthusiast employed for a time at the Vital Records Office in Chicago, sent to the Philadelphia office a request for a copy of Murray's birth certificate. Kapson specified the years 1876-1878. He received an affidavit of no recorded birth for the city's hospitals.

By 1880 the family was residing in 15 McFarland Place, a working class part of the city. The limited financial prospects facing a blacksmith in Philadelphia at that time, combined with the needs of a growing family (a third child, John, was born in June 1881), must have convinced Patrick to re-

locate. The family moved to Denver, Colorado.

Patrick Murray evidently found Denver to his liking since he remained there for the rest of his life, becoming a general contractor during the city's building boom in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. He drowned tragically in 1897 while assisting in rescue efforts during one of Denver's periodic floods.

While growing up at 1348 South Water Street, Billy formed a friendship with Fred and Ed Stone, who later gained renown as vaudevillians. Fred Stone, four years older than Billy, was born in Valmont, Colorado.

By the early 1890s, Billy may have felt the influence of future brother-in-law Jim Tabor, an electrician at the Tabor Grand Opera House. The opera house exposed Murray to the wide array of entertainers passing through the Mile-High City. His own preferences as a budding performer were now becoming more solidified. He worked on a "rube song and dance act" with friend Jimmy Mackin.

At age 13 Billy ran away from home and school to be a jockey at a racetrack near Denver called Overland Park (he appears to have been confined to work as an exercise boy). Weeks later his mother discovered his whereabouts and brought him home. By the time Billy was 16, it must have been apparent to Patrick and Julia that their oldest son's energy and love of adventure could not be suppressed indefinitely. Faced with the demands of raising a large family, Billy's parents allowed him to join Harry Leavitt's High Rollers Troupe as an actor in 1893, reports Jim Walsh in the April 1942 issue of Hobbies. Harry Leavitt was a touring impresario.

Murray was now 16 years old--on the threshold of adulthood by standards of that era--and ready to assume responsibilities such as full-time employment. His relative lack of formal

schooling was not particularly pronounced for those times.

Remaining in Denver would have hindered Billy in his show business ambitions. While Denver was a vibrant metropolis of 106,713 people by 1890 (according to the census rolls), it was located far from America's entertainment centers. To actors in both vaudeville and the serious stage, Denver was basically a brief resting place amidst a numbing string of provincial tank towns connecting the relatively populous West Coast with the more populous eastern segment of the nation. If Billy was going to leave his mark in show business, he had to relocate to the centers where the demand for entertainers was highest.

The high hopes Billy possessed at the outset of his first tour must have been compromised somewhat by the poor attendance at the High Rollers shows. Jim Walsh reports in the April 1942 issue of Hobbies that following its arrival at Salt Lake City, the troupe was forced to bum its way to scheduled one-night stands, walk, sneak rides in freight trains, or perch on top of baggage cars. Faced with this bleak state of affairs, Murray joined with several other troupe members—Matt Keefe of Leadville, Colorado (his yodeling would

later be featured on many recordings); Billy Brown of Pueblo; and Harry O'Brien of Denver—to form a male quartet. The group bid Leavitt and his remaining performers farewell and set off on their own. Despite inexperience at entertaining and handling the business end of touring, they managed to secure some employment at first.

When the quartet was no longer able to support itself, Murray sang in honky-tonks, medicine shows, and small-time vaudeville venues. He performed solo and with partner Keefe, primarily on the West Coast. As years went by it must have become apparent to Billy that his thespian skills fell somewhat short of the big leagues. Based on accounts of observers from the early decades of the twentieth century, Murray was an engaging Master of Ceremonies and adequate song-and-dance man, but he had no outstanding trait which set him above others who worked on the stage.

It is difficult to know when Murray's thoughts turned to recording songs as an alternative way to make a living. Although commercial releases, whether intended for the home or arcade, had only been available since the latter part of the 1880s, the recording industry by this time—the late 1890s—already had a number of recording stars, including John Philip Sousa's U.S. Marine Band, Len Spencer, Dan W. Quinn, George J. Gaskin, Russell Hunting, and J.W. Myers.

Health problems threatened to terminate whatever career aspirations Billy might have had. Walsh states in the April 1942 issue of Hobbies,

What near-drowning and quicksand hadn't accomplished, an apparent combination of tuberculosis and Bright's disease seemed likely to do. Frequently, after singing at a honky-tonk, he was so weak it was almost impossible for him to creep to his lodging house where a kind hearted elderly landlady would wrap him up warmly and tuck him in bed. Eventually, deciding that if he were going to die he would meet death with his boots on, he resorted to a regimen of cold baths and...mountain climbing. The treatment worked and within a few years he was...a miracle of endurance.



Matt Keefe teamed up with Murray in the 1890s. In San Francisco the two visited Peter Bacigalupi's shop, where Murray made his first recordings.

Pivotal to Murray's career was the day in 1896 or 1897 when he and Keefe visited the headquarters of the Bacigalupi Brothers in San Francisco to gain employment as phonograph artists.

Walsh, who researched Murray's career carefully, cites 1897. Murray cites the earlier year in "My Twin—The Phonograph," stating, "In 1896 I was trouping with a minstrel show, and finally landed in 'Frisco.' The Edison Jobbers in San Francisco were Bacigalupi Brothers, and one of the members of the firm, or one of their customers, attended a performance at which Matt Kief [sic], the famous minstrel, and myself sang 'The County Mayo'...As a result, Matt and I were engaged to go to the store and make some records of the song. At that time many dealers had devices by which eight records could be made at once, and Matt and I were set to work in front of one of these."

The Bacigalupis were then the West Coast distributor for Edison cylinders. Ray Phillips gives an excellent account of the business in "Peter Bacigalupi: Pioneer Edison Dealer," published in the April 1975 issue of the Journal of the American Phonograph Society (Vol. IV, No. 2). Phillips reports that the first listing in the San Francisco City Directory that gives the Bacigalupi name is the 1895 edition, which lists, "EDISON PHONOGRAPH AND KINETOSCOPE ARCADE, Peter Bacigalupi, Proprietor, 946 Market." The 1897 listing changes to "EDISON PHONOGRAPH PARLOR, Peter Bacigalupi, Proprietor, 946 Market, sales 933 Market." The kinetoscope had evidently lost popularity by this time.

In San Francisco, Murray observed Edward M. Favor singing into several machines, each of which was spinning a blank wax cylinder. Favor, who was then contracted to perform at the nearby Orpheum Theater, was among the first professional recording artists. Due to high demand for Edison cylinders in the Eastern portion of the United States, the company's recording center in Orange, New Jersey proved to be inadequate in supplying them to Western dealers. The Bacigalupis consequently recorded and released their own cylinders. These weren't listed in Edison catalogs.

After Murray and Keefe participated in a trial session, they heard the playback of their duet

treatment of Raymond A. Browne's "The Lass From the County Mayo." Murray liked what he heard, stating in the 1917 piece, "I can remember very well how queer it seemed to me to hear my own voice coming out of a phonograph horn and how proud I was of myself." This is in contrast to artists who were appalled when they heard for the first time their voices on recordings.

This promising start enabled Murray and Keefe to make more cylinders, drawing from a repertoire which included "coon songs," sentimental ballads, and religious standards such as "The Holy City." These recordings would have been sold on the West Coast and overseas, perhaps in Hawaii, China, and Japan.

No Bacigalupi cylinders by Murray are known to exist. Brown wax cylinders were highly susceptible to breakage and mildew. Also, people used to re-record over such cylinders when they were worn. The 1906 earthquake and fire deva-



And this is Billy Murray, a frequent visitor to the Emerson Recording Studios.

Murray's recording debut in 1897 went unnoticed. In 1919, The Talking Machine World reported on Murray's smallest movements.

stated much of San Francisco and Murray cylinders in homes may have been destroyed at that time. A narrative by Peter Bacigalupi in the July 1906 issue of Edison Phonograph Monthly establishes that quake damage left him with no inventory.

It would be obvious to any singer that success in the new recording field could only be achieved on the East Coast. In 1898, interest in the Alaska gold rush was peaking and Murray decided to pan for gold. He possibly fell again under Harry Leavitt's influence. The impresario was also known to have traveled to the Frozen North at this time. Murray purchased a ticket for passage on a ship but for some reason he missed the departure. Whatever disappointment Murray might have felt turned to relief, Walsh reports, when the singer discovered that this vessel sank on its way north, drowning everyone on board.

Sometime around the turn of the century Murray obtained a break when the Al G. Field Minstrels visited California. Murray was hired as a "blackface singer and eccentric dancer," as Walsh puts it in a 1954 Hobbies article titled "Victor's Billy Murray Dies at 77." According to the April 8, 1921 issue of Variety, Field, born in Leesburg, Virginia, November 7, 1848, had entered into minstrelsy as a youth and headed his own organization for 36 years. His troupe always looked for new talent.

Field helped shape Murray as an entertainer. At the outset the singer's name appeared on posters as "Mr. Wm. Murray," but the impresario snorted one day, "That's one hell of a name for a comedian! From now on you're Billy Murray!" According to Walsh, Murray claimed he learned more about popular singing from Field than anyone else during his career. In addition, the troupe appears to have allowed Murray to make valuable New York City contacts (Field had begun playing at the Grand Opera house around 1896).

The Al G. Field Minstrels traveled east in 1903. When the troupe reached New York City, Murray made the rounds of record companies in the metropolitan area. According to Walsh in the May 1942 issue of Hobbies, Murray had letters of introduction from the Western branch of Edison

Records, testifying that his Edison cylinders recorded in San Francisco had been genuine hits and that he was a "natural" recording artist. Murray secured a recording engagement with Edison almost immediately.

His first recordings to be marketed nationwide were released in August 1903. Both cylinders, the "coon" songs "I'm Thinking of You All the While" (No. 8452) and "Alex Busby, Don't Go Away" (No. 8453), were hits. Recognizing Murray's success, Edison steadily supplied two-minute cylinder releases in the following months:

September 1903: I Could Never Love Like That (Coon song).....8477

October 1903: Won't You Kindly Hum Old Home Sweet Home To Me (Coon song).....8521

November 1903: Under A Panama (Coon song).....8541

December 1903: Bedelia, an Irish Coon Serenade8550

December 1903: Up in the Cocoanut Tree (Love Song of the Cocoanut Grove).....8564

January 1904: Under the Anheuser Bush (Waltz with orchestra accompaniment).....8575

January 1904: Mary Ellen (Irish coon serenade with orchestra accompaniment).....8597



"Under A Panama"—recorded in September 1903.

Murray's first Victor recording session was on September 2, 1903. These titles were recorded:

- B-386 I'm Thinking of You All of the While (No. 2467)
- B-387 Alec Busby, Don't Go Away (unissued)
- B-388 Won't You Kindly Hum "Home Sweet Home" to Me (unissued)
- B-389 Up in a Cocoanut Tree (No. 2453)
- B-390 My Little 'Rang Outang (No. 2454)

He returned on September 10, 1903 to make additional takes as well as to record two new ones: "I Never Could Love Like That" and "Under a Panama." The company, heralding him as a "new singer of coon songs whose records are unusually clear," issued four discs in November 1903:

- I Never Could Love Like That (No. 2452)
- Up In A Cocoanut Tree (No. 2453)
- My Little 'Rang Outang (No. 2454)
- Under A Panama (No. 2455)

Walsh reports that "Ragtime Bob" Roberts warned Murray to keep away from Columbia, exclaiming, "I do all the comic business around here!" However, the two soon became friends, even doing duets together. Murray's Columbia disc, "Tessie (You Are the Only, Only!)" (No. 1163), proved to be popular. From a Broadway musical titled The Silver Slipper, the song was adopted by the Boston Pilgrims' "Royal Rooters" as their theme song. Their use of it peaked during the first World Series in the fall of 1903. The Royal Rooters led the fans in verse after verse, with new lyrics that lampooned the opposition.

Murray followed this in early 1904 with three more popular Columbia recordings: "Navajo" (No. 1655), "Under the Anheuser Bush" (No. 1676), and "I Can't Do That Sum" (No. 1687). The low catalog numbers have led some to assume that the discs might have been recorded earlier than Murray's first Edisons. Murray himself told Quentin Riggs that his initial East Coast recordings were made for Edison in 1903. Murray also made Columbia cylinders late in 1903, including:

- It Takes the Irish to Beat the Dutch (No. 32355)
- Under A Panama (No. 32356)
- General Hardtack on Guard (No. 32357)
- Plain Mamie O'Hooley (No. 32367)
- Mary Ellen (No. 32368)
- The Girl You Love (No. 32369)
- Dear Sing Sing (No. 32374)
- Lazy Bill (No. 32376)
- Under the Anheuser Bush (No. 32384)

Artists whose services were in high demand tended to record for many companies in the early years of the phonograph industry. Murray was soon cutting popular songs of the day for any company willing to pay for his services. These freelance activities appear to have filled his working hours in that rehearsals and multiple takes for each song were the norm. Around this time Murray rejected Len Spencer's offer to serve as Murray's business manager. Walsh tells about Spencer's offer:

Spencer has a formal, slightly drawling way of speaking, something like that of the old-time tragedians he sometimes impersonated, and he always addressed Billy as "Will-yam".... "Will-yam," Len would say, "you are too easy-going. You are not receiving the stipend to which your great abilities entitle you. Make me your business agent, Will-yam, at a mere fifteen per cent of your earnings, and I guarantee to increase your honorarium most substantially."

"Sure, Len!" the good-natured Billy would agree. Out of range of Spencer's impressive personality, however, he would see the matter in a different light. "Why," he would ask himself, "should I pay Len fifteen per cent to be my booking agent when I've already got all the work I can possibly do?" So he would 'phone to Spencer and say: "I've been thinking it over, Len, and I don't believe I want to go ahead with that agent's proposition of yours."

"Very well, Will-yam!" Len would reply, with unruffled dignity. "It shall be as you wish. But I give you fair warning—you'll live to regret your lack of business acumen!"

Songs which Murray recorded in 1903-1904 for more than one record company include "It Takes the Irish to Beat the Dutch" (Columbia, Victor), "Ain't It Funny What a Difference Just a Few Hours Can Make" (Columbia, Victor), "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis" (Columbia, Edison, Victor), "Alexander" (American, Edison), and "Teasing" (Columbia, Kalamazoo, Victor).

Walsh has given reasons why Murray was in such demand:

*Everybody said Billy Murray's records were the only ones so clear you could catch every word on first hearing. This was partly because there was a certain "ping" to his voice that cut sharp into the wax and he was also smart enough to nasalize certain syllables--exactly as printers use *Italic type*--to make important words and phrases stand out.*

Cesare Sodero, Edison's recording director prior to being named conductor of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, noted another key ingredient behind Murray's success, namely that Murray had the finest enunciation and breath control of any vocalist Sodero had ever come across.

Walsh adds that Murray came to be viewed as the funniest man on records, that "even topical songs that would have sounded banal or stupid from other lips were transferred into gems of ironic commentary when he cracked down."

By mid-1905, Victor advertised that Mur-

ray's rendition of "The Yankee Doodle Boy" was the top selling record in its history. By June 1906, that honor went to "The Grand Old Rag." Months later "Cheyenne" became a big seller. Other popular Murray recordings in these years include "Give My Regards to Broadway" (Edison 3165; Columbia 3165; Zonophone 140), "In My Merry Oldsmobile" (Victor 4467; Columbia 3564), and "Everybody Works But Father" (Victor 4519).

It was obvious to record buyers and company executives that Murray was an exceptionally versatile interpreter of a wide array of genres. He had initially sung only coon songs for Edison, which was in keeping with his performing background and his billing with the Al G. Field Minstrels, but within months Murray was regularly recording love songs, ballads, hits from Broadway musicals, comic songs, vaudeville sketches, ethnic material, and topical songs.

CORRECTION: The Library of Congress in-house expert on pioneer recordings, George Kipper, informs V78J that he is happy to help researchers with inquiries about early recordings. However, passages about Kipper in the Murray excerpt in V78J's 6th issue are incorrect. Kipper has never represented the Library of Congress regarding Jim Walsh or the Walsh holdings. Mr. Kipper neither spoke to Walsh nor visited his home. No activities attributed to Kipper in this excerpt took place. I apologize for the error.

I'm On My Way To Reno

Words by
WILLIAM JEROME

Music by
JEAN SCHWARTZ

March tempo



NEXT ISSUE: MORE ON BILLY MURRAY....

NEW VICTOR RECORDS



ORTHOPHONIC RECORDING

The New Victor 6 Record Album



IN order that you may become familiar with the new Orthophonic Records, we have grouped together six of them into a special album.

These six records represent widely different kinds of music—the only way to show you fully how the Orthophonic method of recording applies to, and advances, everything in music, from the concert orchestra, or the operatic chorus, down to the half spoken patter of the rough-and-ready comedian.

Just because of these differences, they form a balanced collection of music in miniature—a little collection which can be played through hundreds of times without dulling the edge of enjoyment. It will help you greatly in selecting other music.

Three of these six records are mentioned elsewhere in these pages; and you may be sure, in buying the album, that you are obtaining rec-

ords which represent the last word in recorded music. The six are as follows: The Richard Crooks songs, mentioned on the first page; the Intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana" and the Barcarolle from "The Tales of Hoffman;" the two Frank Crumit Songs, "Pretty Little Dear" and "Get Away, Old Man, Get Away;" "At Peace with the World and You" and "Valencia," on the organ, by Jesse Crawford; "Lucky Day" and "The Birth of the Blues," The Revelers; and "Barcelona" and "On the Riviera," by Jack Shilkret and His Victor Orchestra.

We think this album will solve for you the problem of buying a few new Orthophonic records. You may substitute other records of your own choice—either a complete set of six or single records. For music lovers of sharply defined musical tastes, the little groups of six records each, announced on other pages, are worth the most serious attention.



Orthophonic

WITH the Victor Orthophonic Records we, the Victor Company, bid farewell forever to the old methods of recording music; and you, our audiences in every part of the world, will now have music in your own homes, of a kind you might never have thought possible on reproducing instruments.

With Orthophonic methods, you have reality. You no longer have a reproduction of music, you hear the music itself. You may compare your experience with that of some one who for a long time has been looking at walls and pictures, and who for the first time opens the window and looks out upon nature and upon life.

You now have everything in music; the splendid rich bass tones missing from re-



Six Popular Victor Records

My Cutey's Due at Two—Fox Trot	Weems' Orchestra	20120	10	\$0.75	Vale The Syn. Whc
I'm Going to Park—Fox Trot	Weems' Orchestra				
Ya Gotta Know How to Love	Austin	20044	10	.75	Hi-I
Bye Bye Blackbird	Gene Austin				
Eleanor	Victor Salon Orchestra	20176	10	.75	Whc
Out of the Dusk to You	Victor Salon Orchestra				

e Recording

These labels identify the
New VICTOR RECORDS
(Orthophonic Recording)



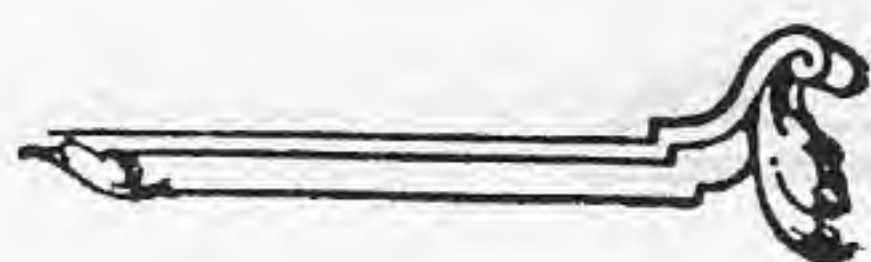
corded music for so many years; the true tingle of the higher tones, and the true colors and sounds of the speaking human voice. You no more seem separated from the artists as by a thin gauze curtain; they stand in the room beside you.

The new Orthophonic Recording captures everything in music; there is no limit to the number of performers. We now record music through the microphone, not the old-fashioned "horn". The new records are made of a material eliminating the unpleasant scratch. And, as ever, you have the greatest artists in the whole range of the world's experience. Their NEW Victor records, with the Orthophonic Victrola, alone reach the acme of perfection.

(Orthophonic Recording)

ancia	The Revelers	} 20082	10	.75
Blue Room	The Revelers			
pathy Waltz <i>Piano</i>	Frank Banta	} 20085	10	.75
n the Red Robin—Fox Trot	Frank Banta			
Diddle-Diddle—Fox Trot	Olsen's Music	} 20112	10	.75
re'd You Get Those Eyes	Olsen's Music			
—Fox Trot				





AN EXQUISITELY BEAUTIFUL NEW PORTABLE VICTROLA



Number *Two-Sixty*

List Price—\$40.00



A PORTABLE VICTROLA that will compare, in appearance, with a lady's fine pocket-book or handbag, is the latest product of the Victor factories.

"It is the most beautiful thing of its kind that I ever saw." This was the verdict of the first lady permitted to see it; and it will be your opinion too.

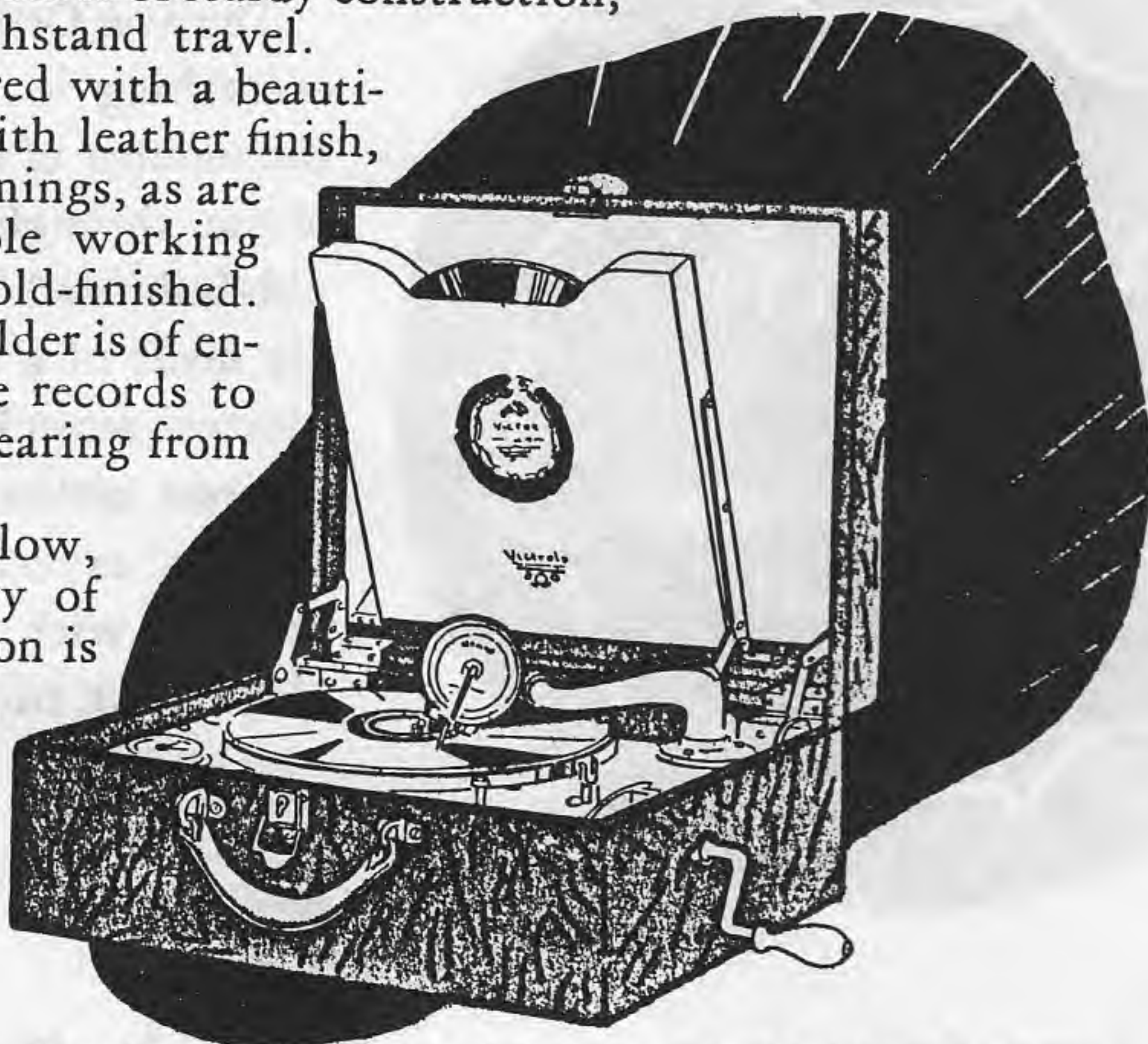
This Victrola is of sturdy construction, built to withstand travel.

It is covered with a beautiful fabric with leather finish, and its trimmings, as are all its visible working parts, are gold-finished.

Its record holder is of en-

tirely new type, presenting the records to you by their edges, and disappearing from sight when the lid is closed.

The specifications, given below, afford little idea of the beauty of this instrument. Its construction is of the sterling Victor quality, and its musical reproduction the finest obtainable in portable instruments. It will go with you anywhere; in the auto, the canoe, to the summer cottage, to the dance on the other side of town.



A portable Victrola with a choice of finishes in two-toned dark brown or dark blue

ENCASED in a durable leather-finished fabric. Choice of finish in dark blue with leather figured texture, or dark brown with shark-skin texture. Size 7 inches high, 16½ inches wide, 13½ inches deep, weight 22 pounds.

Ingenious concealed amplifying chamber—the newest product of the Victor Research laboratories.

Built-in safety record container; holds twelve ten-inch Records. When the lid is raised the container automatically opens and is suspended between the lid and the turntable. Records easily accessible.

Equipped with improved Victrola No. 4 sound box.

Turntable operated by spring motor—runs eight minutes without rewinding and may be wound while playing.

Speed regulator. Strong lid clasp with lock and key.

Plays all Victor Records, ten- or twelve-inch size.

Interior and exterior fittings gold-finished.

Genuine leather handle, flexible for comfortable carrying. Spring clips inside the instrument for the removable winding key.

Closed container for steel needles; clips to hold metal box of tungs-tone needles. Container (non-spilling type) to hold used needles.

Handy's "The 'St. Louis Blues'": An American Classic

By Tom Morgan

Perhaps the most popular blues song ever is William Christopher Handy's "St. Louis Blues," written over eighty years ago. Sheet music actually gives the title as "The 'St. Louis Blues'" but singers have shortened the title over the years. The song has been recorded countless times, inspired motion pictures, brought fame to its singers—not bad for a song that Handy had a hard time selling.

THE SONG'S ORIGINS

According to the composer himself, Handy was inspired to write the song after wandering the streets of St. Louis. One afternoon he met a black woman tormented by her husband's absence. She told Handy: "Ma man's got a heart like a rock cast in de sea." Handy, forty years old at the time, drew his inspiration for many of his songs from African-American words and music, so it is not surprising that he began to compose a theme to this woman's anguish. He later said his aim was "to combine ragtime syncopation with a real melody in the spiritual tradition."

The song, along with many of Handy's, was composed in a Memphis bar called PWee, headquarters for Handy's band and many other African American musicians on Beale Street. PWee was owned by an Italian immigrant named Pee Wee. In back was a room where musicians could check their instruments and take calls for future performances. The establishment, like similar ones on Beale Street, never closed, so it was always available as a place for rest, relaxation, and introspection for African-American performers.

"St. Louis Blues" contains Afro-Spanish habanera rhythms heard by Handy when he toured Cuba with his minstrel show at the turn of the century. Related to rhythms in Spanish Tangos, they are derived from the African "tangana." The final strain in the song Handy borrowed from an instrumental he had written the year before, "The Jogo Blues," whose melody came from Handy's preacher. When the preacher was a boy, he chanted the tune as the collection plate was

passed. "St. Louis Blues" was dedicated to Mr. Russell Gardiner, a St. Louis friend who had liked Handy's previous "Jogo Blues."

The song that would become the best known "blues" in the world was initially turned down by every publisher Handy approached. He published it himself in September 1914 with former song writing partner Harry Pace. Initially, the future blockbuster did not illicit much interest.

The song finally received some notice two years later when Pace and Handy moved their publishing firm to New York City. It was first performed publicly in that city by a female impersonator. In the audience was a young Ethel Waters, who acquired performance rights from Handy and became the first woman to perform the song in public.

Another story has "St. Louis Blues" as the song that sparked a great dance craze. The Shimmy, which finds its roots in Spencer Williams' 1917 "Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble" (literally translated



Armstrong recorded the song a few times. This pirated copy is notable since Armstrong himself took legal action in February 1952 (as co-complainant with Columbia) against the Jolly Roger label, a civil suit that doomed jazz bootlegs.

"chemise she wobbles"), was thought to have originated in a black cafe in Chicago and was then brought to New York via Broadway in 1918. The woman who introduced the dance on Broadway may have been Gilda Gray, who sang "St. Louis Blues" at the Winter Garden Theater. Soon white stars of stage and vaudeville sang it.

EARLY RECORDINGS

It was first recorded by Prince's Orchestra in early 1916 and was issued as twelve-inch Columbia A5772 in mid-1916. The Victor Military Band "introduced" the song when it recorded Handy's "Joe Turner Blues," issued in December 1916 as ten-inch Victor disc 18174. "St. Louis Blues" is played throughout the second half of this disc, with no return to "Joe Turner Blues."

Early instrumental versions were recorded by saxophonist F. Wheeler Wadsworth in various ensembles. He was a member (with Victor Arden and George Hamilton Green) of the All Star Trio, which recorded the song for Edison on January 3, 1919. It was issued as Blue Amberol 3741 in June 1919—the first cylinder version. The trio recorded it for other companies, with Okeh 1142 issued in April 1919 and Lyric 4208 issued in early 1920. Wadsworth's Novelty Dance Orchestra recorded it, with Pathé 22038 issued in March 1919 and Empire 31104 issued in June 1919.

Jim Europe's 369th U.S. Infantry ("Hellfighters") Band recorded it as an instrumental for Pathé in March 1919. Issued in August 1919, this is the earliest recorded version available today on compact disc.

Al Bernard helped popularize "St. Louis Blues" in the 1919-1921 period. He was probably the first vocalist to record it, singing it on the rare Emerson 9163 issued in May 1919 and the rare Aeolian-Vocalion #12148 issued in July 1919. Bernard recorded several Handy songs in this period but recorded "St. Louis Blues" most often.

In his autobiography, Handy acknowledges Bernard's importance and recounts how Bernard took Handy's letter of recommendation to Thomas Edison, who "liked Al Bernard's test and immedi-

ately contracted for this blue song as well as other numbers that might be sung by the young Southerner." Bernard's Edison version was issued as Blue Amberol 3930 in March 1920 and then Diamond Disc 50620. When the company issued Bernard's Blue Amberol version, promotional literature stated that the song "is one of the real originals of the many songs of this character that have recently been greatly in demand." Along with the Bernard and All Star Trio versions, Edison also issued it on cylinder format as performed by a Hawaiian guitar team and by B.A. Rolfe and His Palais D'Or Orchestra. Bernard was vocalist when the Original Dixieland Jazz Band recorded the song for Victor on May 21, 1921 (18772). Accompanied by Carl Fenton's Orchestra, he sang it in late 1920 for Brunswick (2062).

"St. Louis Blues" was recorded fewer than a dozen times in the 'teens, but in the 1920s the song was recorded by many more artists and was carried by nearly every label. It became a favorite with jazz bands, dance bands, and vocalists. In April 1920, Marion Harris recorded it, the first female vocalist to do so. In early 1922, Handy himself recorded it for the first time. He recorded it a second time in late 1939.

In 1925, Bessie Smith, backed by Louis Armstrong, recorded it and in 1929 Louis put his own interpretations on disk. Rudy Vallee, Cab Calloway, the Mills Brothers and the Boswell Sisters all made recordings of the song in 1930. Benny Goodman had a successful turn with it in 1939 and Earl Hines liked it so much he adapted it to a boogie woogie beat and had a hit in 1940 with "Boogie Woogie On The St. Louis Blues."

Brian Rust's Jazz Records: 1897-1942 lists over 100 versions of "St. Louis Blues." No other song in Rust's 1982 "Title Index" (included in the 5th Edition) is listed so many times. That is a good place to start if one were to compile a discography of all recordings of the song. Rust lists jazz recordings made before the Petrillo Ban. Add post-1942 versions, vocal interpretations, dance band versions—the list would be long. The song was so popular that, 40 years after publication, it supplied Handy with annual royalties of almost \$25,000.

POPULARITY ABROAD, STAGE, FILM

"St. Louis Blues" was popular not only in America. In the 1920s, Great Britain's King Edward VIII asked Scottish bag pipers to play it for him. It was performed at Prince George's and Grecian Princess Marina's wedding.

In 1940, at the beginning of WWII, noted French jazz critic Charles Delaunay was convinced that the Nazis would ban jazz after the United States entered the conflict. He encouraged French musicians to continue playing American jazz songs but to protect the music by giving it a French name. Thus "St. Louis Blues" became "La Tristesse de Saint Louis" (the sadness of St. Louis).

In Vienna, under Nazi occupation, the song title lost all connection with St. Louis when musicians who still wanted to play American music gave it the very Germanic title of "Sauerkraut," successfully slipping it by the ever present eyes and ears of the S.S.

Another memorable Broadway stage appearance of "St. Louis Blues" was in George White's Scandals of 1926. White had an extravagant production built around a battle between the blues and the classics. The classics were represented by the Fairbanks Twins, who sang one song by Robert Schumann and one by Franz Schubert. The blues were represented by Margaret and Dorothy McCarthy, who performed Handy's "Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues." In the production, a truce in the musical battle was called when both parties agreed on Gershwin's "Rhapsody In Blue," played at the peak of the battle. "St. Louis Blues" was also used in 1930 in an all-black revue entitled "Change Your Life."

The song was used in a number of short and feature length films. Some were inspired by the lyrics and others used the now familiar title as a vehicle for other musical themes. The only film in which Bessie Smith appeared was aptly titled St. Louis Blues. It was filmed in June of 1929 in Astoria, Long Island, and released later that year. The 16 minute dramatization starred Bessie as a mistreated wife. Handy was musical director and script co-author. The orchestra featured pianist James P. Johnson accompanied by members of

Fletcher Henderson's Band and the W.C. Handy choir. The short is available on videotape.

In 1939, the song made it to the big screen again when Raoul Walsh directed St. Louis Blues, a musical set on a Mississippi showboat. The plot did not relate to the song, but "St. Louis Blues" was sung as one of the numbers. Artists included jazz singer Maxine Sullivan and composer/singer/actor Hoagy Carmichael.

A few years later "St. Louis Blues" was the subject of another short film. In 1941, Alvino Rey and his orchestra, featuring the King Sisters, presented a three minute interpretation of the classic. St. Louis Blues was the title of a 1958 film loosely based on Handy's life starring Nat King Cole. The movie's cast of jazz all-stars included Pearl Bailey, Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald and Barney Bigard. The soundtrack used over ten Handy songs as well as the title song.

No other song has a sports franchise named after it, namely The St. Louis Blues.

Handy remarked that his whole life revolved around "St. Louis Blues" from the time he wrote it. The composition wound its way into many lives in the last eight decades. The next time you hear the song's famous refrain, "Oh, I hate to see the evening sun go down," remember that the sun has never set on this American classic.

©MORGAN 1996. TOM MORGAN IS AUTHOR OF FROM CAKEWALKS TO CONCERT HALLS.



Editor's Comments

I appreciate the letters that come daily as well as email (tgracyk@garlic.com). I rely on correspondence for planning future issues, and I enjoy knowing who in the field is doing projects. In the next few pages I share information sent by others and add my own thoughts.

BRITISH BOOKS AVAILABLE

Jazz collectors who used to subscribe to the British publication Storyville will be interested in plans editor Laurie Wright has for the future. He writes to V78, "Although I have closed Storyville magazine, that is not the end of the road. I have several books in the pipeline. Also I am planning a book version of the magazine along the lines of our bound volumes to appear at odd intervals." He sent an updated list of the many Storyville books still in print. I had wrongly assumed most of these were out of print, and I quickly ordered three. One Storyville set not in print is Brian Rust's Jazz Records, which sold out last November—readers have asked about this.

For this list of jazz books, write to Laurie Wright, 66 Fairview Dr, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6HS England. Wright gives a simple formula for buyers who wish to send a check in American dollars. At his end he can transfer funds into Sterling.

Then there is Gramophone Publications, to whom I recently sent a check of \$47 for a postpaid copy of British Dance Bands On Records, edited by Brian Rust and Sandy Forbes. No bank order was needed, no transfer into Sterling—easy! American readers may wish to get a copy before this thick volume goes out of print, as these books invariably do. It is over 1400 pages, covering British dance bands in detail as Rust covered American bands in American Dance Band Discography, which is out of print. This Rust and Forbes book is essential for any who collect the wonderful British dance bands (my own favorites are Jack Hylton, Jack Payne, Lew Stone, Carroll Gibbons, Harry Roy, and Roy Fox—the bands so well represented on BBC's Pennies From Heaven CD soundtrack). My one disappointment is that a

cheaper, brownish paper is used instead of the better quality paper used for Storyville and Arlington House publications. For a copy, contact Gramophone, 177-179 Kenton Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 OHA, Great Britain. I am sad to report that co-editor Sandy Forbes died recently.

An expanded edition of Rust's American Dance Band Discography: 1917-1942 will be available in another year or two, so keep that in mind if you are bidding high on auctions for an old edition. Richard Johnson is working with Rust on the revised edition. If you have corrections, new information or questions, drop V78 a line and I can forward your message to England.

Curious about what is available overseas, I asked Bill Triggs if his book titled The Great Harry Reser is in print. It is. Americans can send \$47 for this hardcover volume of over 200 pages (postpaid—it is sent by air, much faster than by sea). For more information, write to Bill Triggs, "Gnomebilland'd," 29, Middlemead, Stratton-On-The-Fosse, Nr. Bath, BA3 4QH, Somerset.



Bill Triggs' book on Harry Reser is available. Reser's "Heebie Jeebies"—curiously called a "whole tone novelty"—should not be confused with the "Heebie Jeebies" written by Boyd Atkins and recorded by Louis Armstrong in 1926.

BRIAN RUST AND TRAM

V78J has come to rely on Brian Rust as issues are prepared. When a statement in some article needs to be verified, Mr. Rust has had the answers (if there are errors in V78J, it means the editor failed to ask the right questions). It is always a pleasure when Brian Rust shares something about himself, such as his comment in a recent letter that he may be related (distantly) to Frank Trumbauer! Both Tram and Rust are related to Charles Dickens. Tram was the son of the daughter of the daughter of Dickens' sister Hannah, and Rust's great-grandfather was the grandson of one of Dickens' other sisters, which makes Tram one of Rust's oft-removed cousins.

NEW MUSEUMS

Tom Boniface of New York sends happy news that Louis Armstrong's three-story house in Corona, Queens, will be converted into a museum. Satchmo lived there from 1943 to 1971.

Thomas Malloch informs V78J that in Montreal a new museum of technology is open at 1050 Lacasse St. called The Musée des Ondes Emile Berliner. Its opening exhibition is titled "From Gramophone to Satellite." It is fitting that the museum is named after Emile Berliner, who established the first record company in Canada. He built a headquarters and factory buildings on the block bordered by St. Antoine, Lenoir and Lacasse Streets. The Emile Berliner Museum, according to a newspaper account, "is in the building that was constructed in 1941 as RCA's top-secret, wartime research laboratory...The building still houses a working studio built by RCA in 1943." A Berliner "Model A" is on display along with other vintage machines.

INTERNET UPDATE

In past issues I discussed what the Internet offers collectors and urged V78J readers to join those of us already in cyberspace. I confess I now find little time for newsgroup discussions but I

make time for "homepages" on the World Wide Web and add to my own constantly. Whereas a newsgroup is an electronic bulletin board that allows anyone to post comments (these disappear from the system in a short time), a homepage makes available entire articles with visuals. They remain available as long as the homepage owner wants to carry items. A newsgroup is the place for discussions, questions and answers, announcements. A homepage can be equivalent to a journal or book—that is, if a homepage owner carries enough articles and illustrations. So far no homepage covers phonographs or 78s as thoroughly as any journal or book, but that day is coming.

I urge readers to visit my homepage (<http://www.garlic.com/~tgracyk>) and use its links to visit other authors' sites.

The World Wide Web is truly world-wide. After seeing my homepage, Edi Zubovic sent email to me from Crikvenica, Croatia. He is a fan of Vess Ossman and the Victor Military Band. I do not suppose he finds many of their discs at Croatian flea markets. He admits that no one else in his town knows who Ossman was.

In one section, my homepage discusses fibre needles. After mentioning how the B & H Fibre Company imported 20 foot bamboo poles from Japan (later India), I state that no American company makes fibre needles today. Masataka Kinoshita of Tokyo sent email about two Japanese companies making them. Price is 7,500 Yen for a set of 25 needles, around \$3 per needle. Write to Shellman Co., Ltd. 3-14-16, Ginza, Chuo-Ku, Tokyo 104, Japan. Telephone is 81-3-3543-4848. In 1917, B & H sold a package of 100 fibre needles for 40 cents.

MORE ON NAT SHILKRET

Many readers commented on the Nat Shilkret tribute in V78J's 6th issue. I have been the happy recipient of new information, even a rare Shilkret photograph sent by Ron Dethlefsen. Bob Arnold caught my error in crediting Shilkret for composing "Dancing With Tears In My Eyes." It was in fact written by Joe Burke and Al Dubin.

Shilkret made a fine recording of it with Frank Munn but did not compose it. I encourage all readers to let me know about errors or omissions. Because I have two books in progress (an encyclopedia of recording pioneers, a history of "jass"), I update articles stored in my computer when new information and corrections come my way.

With so much additional Shilkret information, someday I must write a long piece that does full justice to the man's rich career. Frederick Williams and Dick Spottswood sent different items that refer to the young Shilkret--when he went by the name Nathan Schildkraut. Williams sent evidence of Shilkret performing at a Willow Grove Park Concert as early as August 15, 1903. He was identified as a "10-year old clarinet phenomenon"! He was really 13, not 10, but child performers were often introduced as younger than they really were.

Don Peak of Hollywood sent a cassette of Shilkret speaking to Andy Sannella. The conversation is about Shilkret recording "The Lonesome Road" twice for Victor, one label bearing Gene Austin's name, the other Shilkret's.

After writing something more definitive on Nat Shilkret, I must then write up everything I have learned about his talented brother Jack.

ABOUT CASSETTES

I asked in the last V78J if anyone had a copy of Fred Van Eps' 1956 LP titled Five String Banjo. Lew Green promptly sent it on tape. His father, George Hamilton Green, worked with Van Eps (and Joe Green and Nathan Glanz) in an ensemble. Mr. Green evidently has many banjo recordings. In his own words, he has enough "to sink a house." The tape confirmed that Van Eps was as nimble in old age as in earlier years.

An enjoyable cassette was sent by Douglas Olds, who contributed to the last V78J a list titled "My Most Played Electric Diamond Discs." After I expressed envy at his collection of rare Edisons, he kindly taped his personal favorites for me, including B.A. Rolfe, Duke Yellman, Red and Miff's Stompers, Vaughn De Leath. I now know

why collectors pay high prices for Diamond Discs in the 52,000 series--great tunes, superb sound.

Does anyone have a copy of Arthur Collins singing "Ephraim's Jasbo Band"? I would enjoy hearing it on tape.

V78J has not run out of Ten Most Played Lists! Due to space problems, several are being held for the next V78J, as are articles by Jas Obrecht, Gayle Dean Wardlow, Allan Sutton and V78J's other regulars. The 9th issue will also review Eric Reiss' revised The Compleat Talking Machine. For now, I can say the book is bigger and better--and affordable at \$29.95 (softback).

TOM BALL ASKS FOR HELP

Tom Ball is writing another book. His last one, The Nasty Blues, cites chord changes to a few dozen blues classics and is loaded with visuals that should delight any blues enthusiast. The next book is on guitar pieces in dropped D tuning. He wants perfect visuals for the book. If you have Blind Blake's "Chump Man Blues" (Paramount 12904), William Moore's "One Way Gal" (Paramount 12648), or Funny Paper Smith's "Hungry Wolf" (Vocalion 1655), he would appreciate a photo or clean xerox of the label. Write to Tom at Box 20156, Santa Barbara CA 93120.

WENDELL MOORE OFFERS NEW REPRINTS

Wendell Moore has provided a service to Edison enthusiasts by reprinting in handsome bound volumes the trade publication Edison Phonograph Monthly. The final bound volume, XIV, takes readers through 1916. He now has 1917 EPM issues available at \$4 as single issues. If you wish to sample one, I highly recommend the January 1917 issue featuring Billy Murray's autobiographical essay "My Twin--The Phonograph." Also, Moore has reprinted The 50-Year Story Of RCA Victor Records, a 78 page booklet with many photos. This RCA in-house publication dates from 1953. For more information, write to Wendell Moore at 13278 Greywood Circle, Fort Myers FL 33912. Or call 916-768-5463.

EDISON EVENT ON MAY 18TH

Jerry Fabris, curator of sound recordings at the Edison National Historic Site, made the news recently when he discovered, with Peter Dilg's assistance, an 1888 cylinder lasting 154 seconds featuring the voice of 41 year old Thomas Edison.

Fabris helps organize Site events and hopes V78J's East Coast readers will visit West Orange, New Jersey on Saturday, May 18, 1996 for the 6th annual "Edison Heritage Day." Call the Site at (201) 736-0550, ex. 42 for details. Except for the dance, activities are free. They include:

- * A street fair with vendors and entertainment on Lakeside Avenue in front of Edison NHS.
- * Edison Field Day, re-creating those held by the Edison Company in the 1910s.
- * Machine shop demonstrations in the Edison Lab.
- * A wax cylinder recording session featuring Patsy Stoneman, daughter of Edison recording artist Ernest V. Stoneman. An 1890s Edison recording studio phonograph will be used.
- * Historic Edison films shown in the Black Maria.

* An evening dance. Vince Giordano's Nighthawks play jazz and dance music under the open sky in the Edison Laboratory's courtyard. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for seniors and students.

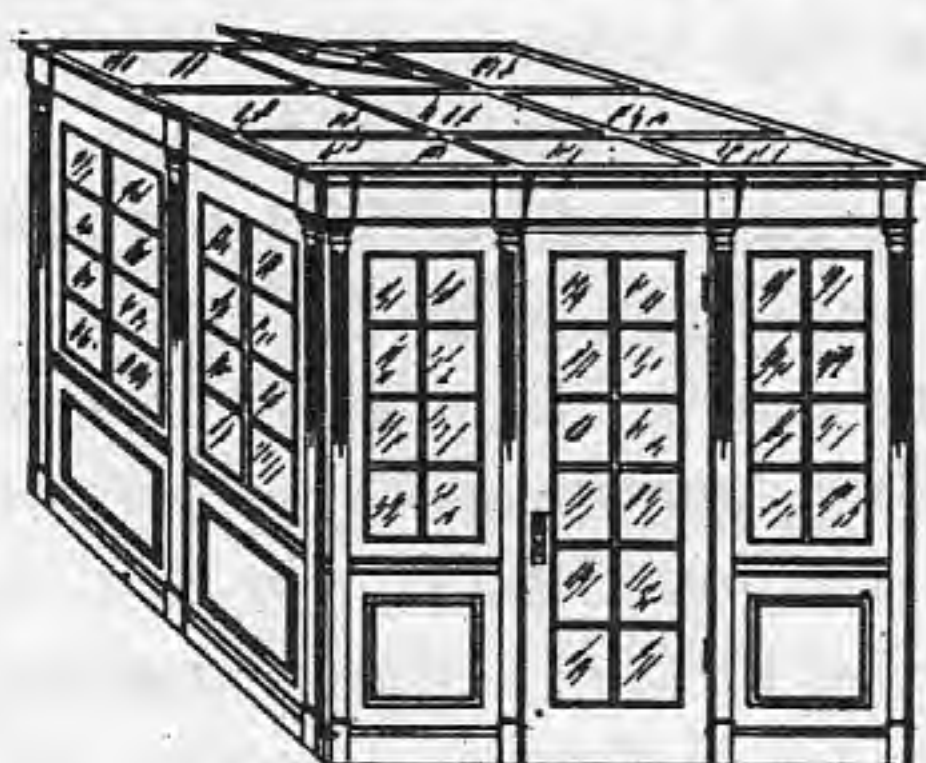
V78J's COVER- AND TUNGS-TONE INFO

This issue's cover shows Victor singers and the rare XVIII. It is from the June 15, 1916 issue of The Youth's Companion. The bottom of Victor's ad, which I could not squeeze in, promotes the "Tungs-tone Stylus." It is among the earliest ads to refer to the new product. Another early reference is in the August 1916 issue of Talking Machine World. Victor encountered obstacles when securing registration for "Tungs-tone": "The word was rejected by the United States Examiner of Trade-Marks at Washington until he was instructed from the office of the United States Commissioner of Patents to rule differently." The Examiner had ruled that "Tungs-tone" was too close to "tungsten," notwithstanding Victor's argument that "the average retail dealer" would put emphasis on the last syllable--"tone." Victor won upon appeal.

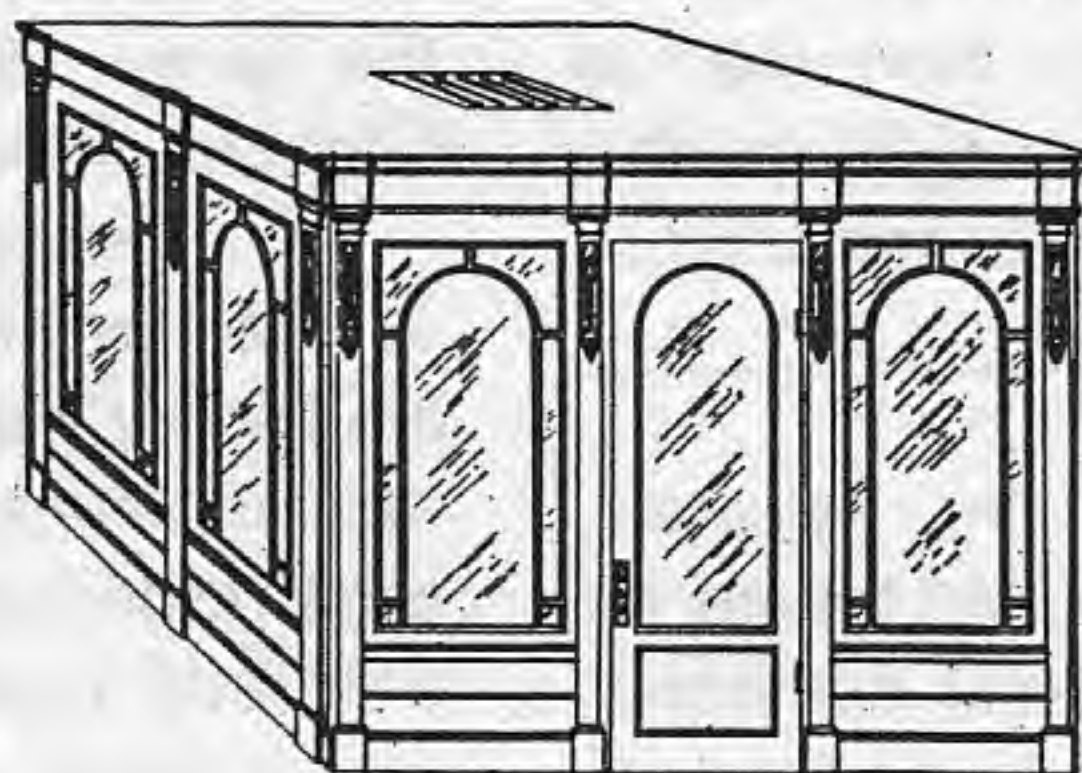
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THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD

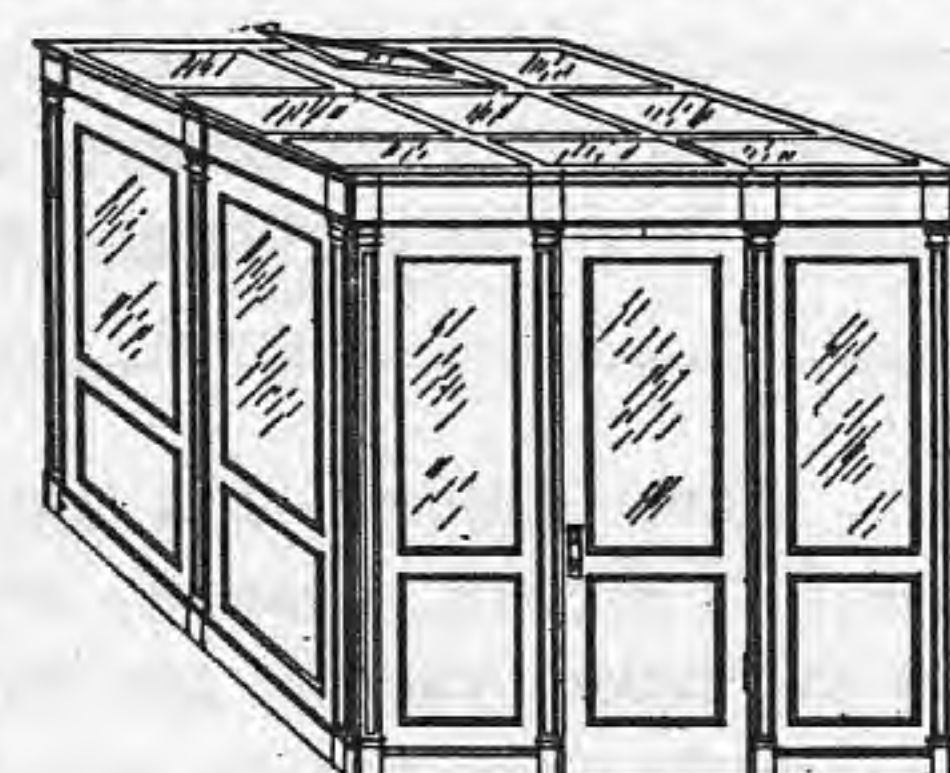
VAN VEEN "BED-SET" SECTIONAL BOOTHS



STYLE "A"



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STYLE "C"

Van Veen Bed-Set Sectional Booths can be erected as easily as a bed (no skilled labor required). Booths shipped on short notice anywhere. Room sizes any multiple of 3 feet. High grade finish, will match your sample if desired. Sound proof construction. Mail your requirements for prices and descriptive circulars. We design and build complete interiors.

ARTHUR L. VAN VEEN & CO., Marbridge Bldg., Broadway and 34th St., New York

From the August 15, 1916 issue of TMW. The trade journal also has photographs of these listening booths. Have all booths been dismantled by now? Coming issues of V78J will duplicate interesting ads. To inspire articles for coming issues, I xeroxed TMW's best pages, bound them between hard covers, and distributed the books to a few of V78J's regular contributors.

Anne Lenner: "Sing For Your Supper"

By Charles Hippisley-Cox

Introduction By Ron Pendergraft

One pleasure I get from record collecting is discovering for the first time a wonderful recording artist and then learning everything I can about that artist. A recent discovery for me is Anne Lenner. The name may not be known to American collectors since Lenner is British and 78s featuring this vocalist were not widely distributed in this country, but she is available on some CDs and is a pleasure to hear. Her voice is smooth, silky, and sexy.

The Anne Lenner recordings I have heard feature her as vocalist for Carroll Gibbons' Savoy Orpheans, beginning in 1934. I now have a small collection of Lenner singing for Gibbons on 78s, LPs, and CDs, with the music ranging from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s. She also recorded with Joe Loss in 1936 and Frank Weir in 1944, but I have not heard these.

I have learned more about her from Charles Hippisley-Cox and Robert T. Deal, both of whom live in England. Each has corresponded with Lenner. The following article by Charles Hippisley-Cox is the best account I have seen of Anne Lenner and I am pleased that V78J readers will learn from this profile about this fine singer.

Anne Lenner was born in Leicester, England, of theatrical parents who had toured for years in revues, variety, and musical comedies. Both parents were singers and three of their six daughters would become famous vocalists with top British bands of the 1930s: Shirley Lenner with Joe Loss; Judy Shirley with Maurice Winnick; and Anne with Carroll Gibbons at the Savoy Hotel.

The sisters took to the stage in their teens, playing in Babes In The Woods and touring in revue. Anne married the revue's dance producer.

In 1933 Lenner found work as a singer in

London's smart Jack's Club and after the club closed, she resolved to stay in London. She soon was at the Cabaret Club with a small four-piece band and megaphone. The band increased to eight musicians and Lenner was given a microphone. Carroll Gibbons came with a party one night and was impressed by the vocalist, inviting her to record radio shows the following morning at 9:30. Lenner overslept despite an early morning call and she thought she had missed her big chance, but Gibbons had been so impressed with her singing that he returned to the club and arranged for a further session at 12:30 midday.

The session was for a commercial Luxembourg broadcast. The nervous Lenner stumbled through her first song, causing Gibbons to call for a coffee break. Lenner again thought her golden opportunity was gone, but the break was a ploy to get her to relax. After chatting with musicians Paul Fenoulhet, Reg Leopold, George Melachrino and others in the band, Lenner was more comfortable and finished the session without a hitch. The broadcasts proved so successful that Lenner became the first featured female vocalist at the Savoy. She had a three year contract with Gibbons' famous Savoy Hotel Orpheans.

Lenner speaks fondly of Gibbons, who was as liked by his musicians as by his public. Here are Lenner's own words: "To work for, he was the most understanding, gentle, and kind person. The boys respected and loved him. He was not the boss [but] interested himself in the private lives and was a friend to all of them. Carroll's boys all looked good and were very versatile—especially George Melachrino, who played oboe, viola and sax, and Reg Leopold, who played violin, viola and sax. I loved singing with the full orchestra but also enjoyed sessions with the Boyfriends and the sweet trumpet of Bill Shakespeare. Through Carroll's influence I enjoyed tremendous respect and kindness from all of them."

When asked about her favorite songs from her years at the Savoy, she reminded me that these years were the heyday of Cole Porter, Rogers & Hart, Rogers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, and Jerome Kern. She specifically mentioned "All The Things You Are," "There's A Lull In My Life," "A Foggy Day," "Room 504," "Sing For Your Supper," and "Broadway Rhythm," all of which she recorded with Carroll. She particularly liked the 1935 recording of "Broadway Rhythm" (Columbia FB-1202), sung with Brian Lawrance and featuring a marvelous arrangement.

When asked which other bands she liked, Lenner mentioned Ambrose and Lew Stone. Female vocalists she admired included Dorothy Carless, Connie Boswell, Bea Wain, Frances Langford and later Peggy Lee. British singers she especially respected were Gloria Brent, Beryl Davis, and Doreen Lundy.

When asked about a typical day for Lenner in the 1930s, she replied a morning might begin with an early recording, either for Columbia records (at EMI Abbey Road Studio) or for commercial broadcasts on Luxembourg. These would be sponsored by Ovaltine, Palmolive Soap, Stork Margarine, Hartley's Jam, or Colgate Toothpaste. Later in the day Lenner might have a "fitting" for clothes to be worn at the Savoy. Many of her dresses were designed by Colin Becke, who was the brother of rival dance band vocalist Eve Becke. Once a week she attended a band rehearsal in the band room at the Savoy, where new arrangements were tried. At the end of a rehearsal in the late afternoon, the band sometimes played for the Dansant or Tea Dance. Then there might be a cocktail party, with a little time for changing clothes for the evening's work at the Hotel starting at 9:30 and ending at 2:00 AM. After work, the singer and her second husband (Gordon Little), along with some of the boys, would often wind down with friends in a night club such as The Nest. Some of the boys would play jazz in these clubs, especially trumpeter Frenchie Sartell.

Saturday night's work ended at midnight. Anne and her husband would get away for weekends, traveling the countryside in their Hum-

ber Snipe.

Lenner states, "My days were always very full and time flew. I was very lucky to be singing during a period of the best song writers and I think when British dance music was at its best."

Lenner sang with Carroll Gibbons and one or two other bands into the war years, but then she moved to Portsmouth to spend more time with her husband, who was in the Navy. She kept up regular forces work and kept broadcast and recording commitments with Gibbons and the BBC. However, she spent less time in London. After her marriage broke down, she worked with Bert Firman in Paris and later back in London for Frank Weir at the Astor Club in Mayfair.

After the war Lenner withdrew from show business to devote time to family. She looked after her mother into the 1980s. Since her mother's death, Lenner has been caring for one of her sisters. Lenner lives in North London and regularly visits the Memory Lane Party Nights and meetings of the Coda Club. Into her 80s, Lenner is still bursting with fun. She is rather modest about her career as vocalist with one of the top bands of its time.



Brian Rust nominates Anne Lenner "as one of the three greatest British dance band vocalists. Dorothy Carless and Elsie Carlisle are the others."

Corrections to the *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States*

By Tim Gracyk

The Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States, published in May 1993, makes available to collectors and researchers much information that is otherwise found only in collector journals. It has entries on recording artists, technology, disc and cylinder companies. Edited by Guy Marco, this reference work is a welcome addition to the field.

While editing articles for V78J, I find Marco's book valuable as I double-check spellings, dates, and facts about artists. In more leisurely moments, I enjoy reading random entries. I wish I could duplicate in V78J entire entries so the book's strengths can speak for themselves.

The book seems unknown among most collectors, perhaps because its publisher, Garland, has targeted libraries as the book's market. It has not been advertised in collectors' journals. I was reminded of how little known the book is by a "Selective Bibliography" in a recent ARSC Journal (Volume 26, No. 2). To help readers find information about cylinders, the bibliography cites mostly short articles in hard-to-find journals, many published long ago. The bibliography begins with Jean-Paul Agnard's 1974 Ma collection de phonographes a cylinders. The bibliography overlooks Marco's work despite it being, along with Koenigsberg's Edison Cylinder Records, the best source in print today for cylinder information. Among the strengths of Marco's book are entries on the many cylinder companies—U-S Phonograph Co., Indestructible, Leeds & Catlin, Busy Bee, Bettini, Lambert Co., Norcross Phonograph Co., others. These entries are solid, some signed by cylinder expert Bill Klinger. The long entry on the generic term "cylinder" is excellent.

When I reviewed Marco's encyclopedia in V78J's 5th issue, I stressed how impressed I was by its nearly 900 pages of reference material but also noted that the book contains errors. I concluded that this first edition will prove useful to many collectors, and that a revised and corrected edition

would prove indispensable for all collectors.

Regrettably, Garland Publishing Inc. has no plans for issuing another edition. When the first edition is sold out, collectors may have to wait a long time before so much information about records and companies is again gathered between two covers. Perhaps the next recorded sound encyclopedia will be sold only as CD ROM.

Even if other recorded sound encyclopedias are published in the future, I fear editors may ignore the relatively small collector journals that offer so much information about the phonograph industry. In coming years Marco's Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States may become one of those sought-after books that command high prices on auction lists. Borrow the book from a library so you can determine if it meets your collecting needs. If it does, order one before the final copies are gone.

Since no plans exist for a corrected edi-



The encyclopedia has solid entries on cylinder companies. The Pathe Freres Compagnie has its own entry. The above is from Joe Wakeman's collection—the book is without illustrations.

tion, and because some who own the encyclopedia are V78J readers, Guy Marco has helped me identify errors and address them here. This is not a formal corrigendum, and perhaps not every error is addressed. One goal is to correct errors in a manner that is interesting and informative to those who own the book but also to those who do not own it. In addressing errors, I hope to make readers aware of the scope of Marco's work—what topics are covered, what kind of details are given in entries. By listing errors, I do not mean to undercut the book's credibility as a reference tool. Some may conclude the errors listed here are serious enough to call into question the work's reliability, but I recommend that you examine the book itself—a large book!—before making a judgement.

I think it is impressive that the encyclopedia has an entry for tenor Charles Harrison since the singer is ignored in all other music reference works, but the entry makes an error in stating that Charles Harrison "sang gospel duets with Harry Anthony" (312). This confuses Charles Harrison with James F. Harrison (whose real name was Frederick Wheeler).

A pair of singers ignored in other reference works is the team of Elizabeth and William Wheeler. The Wheeler entry notes that William "died in November 1916" (763), but Jim Walsh articles in Hobbies establish that William was alive in the 1960s.

John McCormack's entry states that the tenor "starred in the motion picture Song of My Heart in 1919" but the year is wrong. The film was released March 11, 1930.

Will F. Denny's entry incorrectly states that this pioneer recording artist made "two" Zon-O-Phone recordings. This tenor made dozens of 7", 9", and 10" Zon-O-Phones.

Grace Kerns' entry states she was born in 1866 but this should read 1886.

Charles D'Almaine's entry states that the violinist "was born in Hull on 13 June 1971" (170). No doubt "1871" is meant. Sources, including Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings, cite 1861.

The "Hawaiian Music Recordings" entry states, "In 1906 the American Record Co. made 27 discs by the royal Hawaiian Troubadours." As L.E. Andersen shows in V78J's 7th issue, the American Record Co. issued at least 29 Hawaiian discs by March 1905. "Royal" should be capitalized.

Scott Joplin's entry states that the ragtime composer was born on November 24, 1868 in Texarkana, but Ed Berlin's Joplin biography, King of Ragtime (Oxford University Press, 1994), states that "there was no Texarkana when he was born, that the town where he spent most of his childhood was founded five years after his birth" (4). No evidence establishes where Joplin was born. Berlin also states, "November 24, 1868, the date long accepted as Scott Joplin's birth date, is almost certainly incorrect."

The "Ragtime Recordings" entry states that "the earliest disc of piano ragtime is 'Creole Belles'...played by Christopher H.H. Booth" (568). This should read Charles H.H. Booth. The entry reports that Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" was "a great success in 1899," but it is more accurate to say it was published in 1899. Joplin and John Stark signed a contract for publication on August 10, 1899, and the music evidently sold poorly in the remaining months of that year. Ed Berlin writes in the Joplin biography, "William Stark...cited four hundred as the first year's sales, claiming that sales were initially hurt by the music's difficulty" (57). Obviously sales increased as time passed.

The "Disc" entry states, "In April 1899 the Sousa Band began to record for Berliner" (205). Paul Charosh's Berliner Gramophone Records shows that Sousa made Berliners as early as September 1, 1897.

Bert Williams' entry reports that the singer was a Columbia artist beginning in 1906 "except for an Edison Diamond Disc" (767). Williams never made a Diamond Disc. Articles written long ago speculated that Williams may have used the name Duke Rogers to record "Save A Little Dram For Me" (50976), but Ron Dethlefsen reports that a photograph at the Edison National Historic Site establishes that Duke Rogers is a white performer.

I cannot be certain if Lillian Bryant's entry

is right or wrong in claiming that this British pianist and conductor was "the first woman to record commercially as a solo pianist, on HMV and Edison Bell, around 1900" (82), but I know this is contradicted by Ross Laird's claim in Tantalizing Tingles that C. Elsie Blomfield was "apparently the first female piano recording artist." Blomfield made a solo piano disc, Berliner 5510, in London on February 25, 1899. When did Lillian Bryant make her first solo piano recording? Ross Laird's piano discography has its own errors—curiously, it does not list Lillian Bryant recordings—so I am not certain which author is correct about the first woman to make a solo piano recording.

George W. Johnson's entry gives the dates "ca. 1847-1913" but Bill Klinger notes that the years of birth and death are 1846-1914. Klinger also places Johnson's first recordings earlier than Marco's 1892 date. Johnson began recording in the late spring or summer of 1890 for the New York Phonograph Co. and probably concurrently for the New Jersey Phonograph Co.

Bert Wechsler of High Performance Review points out that the Lawrence Tibbett entry incorrectly states that the baritone "made three mo-

tion pictures." Tibbett made six.

Edward R. Bahr observes in a review of the encyclopedia published in ITA Journal (Fall 1993) that the "Brass Instrument Recordings" entry (contributed to the encyclopedia by Bahr himself) has an error at the top of page 75. The sentence was supposed to read, "Further improvements of brass instruments and enlargement of the brass repertoire in the 20th [not 19th] century offered players and recording companies new opportunities." Incidentally, this brass instrument entry is one of many superb mini-essays contributed and signed by recognized experts. These signed entries are among the encyclopedia's strengths.

The Columbia entry gives a fascinating list of the company's many transformations ("a tangle of similar company names"), but it wrongly states that Columbia was "[a]cquired by Warner Brothers, which sold it to Grigsby-Grunos in May 1931" (125). Guy Marco credits Martin Bryan for identifying this error. The Warners never owned Columbia. Perhaps Columbia was confused with Brunswick? The book Brunswick: The Story Of An American Company reports that Harry Warner signed a contract for Brunswick's record and phonograph interests on April 9, 1930, and the Warners later sold the business to the American Record Company.

Richard C. Burns states that a sentence on page 774, in the "Woodwind Recordings" entry, should be corrected to say that clarinetist Louis Cahuzac recorded Hindemith's Clarinet Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra, not the Philadelphia Orchestra. Also, the Frances Saville entry is mistaken in stating that this soprano made only Bettini records. She recorded also for G & T.

David Hall has identified some errors. The Pablo Casals entry should read that the Schubert String Quintet was part of a five-disc set, not that the Quintet was a "five-disc rendition" (103). The Richard Dyer-Bennet entry suggests this folk singer first made records for the Harvard University (Vocarium) label, but he recorded earlier on Frederick D. Packard's label. The Fred Gaisberg entry says he found musicians in 1889 "to perform for the paper cylinders" (277) but this



Suzanne Adams is one of hundreds of singers to have entries. Columbia's entry in the disc market is covered in the encyclopedia—explained better, perhaps, than in any other book.

is an error for wax cylinders.

Mike Sherman, a Victor authority, has identified some errors. The entry for "Deluxe Record" claims that this "was a 12-inch disc at first" but in fact the first Deluxe records were 14-inch. They were announced in mid-March 1903, with the 12-inch Deluxe records announced in June 1903. The entry also states that "about 150 of the 12-inch Deluxe Records were made" but Sherman believes over 300 titles were issued. The "Disc" entry on page 195 claims the first commercial discs were sold by the Berliner Gramophone Co., but the name is wrong. The first discs, issued in the fall of 1894, were sold by Berliner's earlier company, the United States Gramophone Co. Page 198 of the "Disc" entry claims the Victor Talking Machine Co. acquired the National Broadcasting Co. (NBC) in 1926, but the Radio Corporation of America (not Victor) acquired NBC.

Sherman disputes the claim in the "Disc" entry that when the Gramophone Co. issued complete operas in 1907-1908, "American companies offered no competition" (205). In fact, Victor offered the complete Il Trovatore on twenty records for \$21.60. While it is true these were imported recordings, they were nonetheless offered in Victor's domestic catalog.

The "Orchestra Recordings" entry cites as a milestone the 1905 G & T recording of the William Tell overture (493), but Victor had issued the same on four 12-inch discs in 1903. Sherman also corrects the price cited for the 1907 Rigoletto quartet recording, which sold for \$6, not \$4.

William R. Moran suggests how several entries could be more accurate. Luisa Tetrazzini's entry claims that "her sisters Eva and Elvira were also recording artists," but Moran points out a lack of evidence for Eva Tetrazzini ever recording. Ada Crossley should be identified as a contralto, but in one place she is called a "mezzo-soprano" (158) and in another "a soprano" (844). The Crossley entry ends by saying she "died in London on 17 Oct 1919" but this should read 1929.

On page 60, the Gianni Bettini entry claims Bettini recorded Caruso, but this is doubtful.

The entry for Johanna Gadski states, "During World War I, Gadski was in Germany" (277), but Moran notes that the soprano remained in the United States during the war. The Gadski entry later claims "after 1917 her material was deleted" but Gadski remained in the Red Seal pages of the Victor catalog through the mid-1920s.

The Maria Galvany entry reports the soprano died in Brazil in 1949, but the original source for this has been disproved. Galvany's death date is unknown. Moran states that all reports of Galvany's activities cease around 1918, so it is possible she died in the 1918 flu epidemic.

The Melba entry has two errors. The famous Boheme duet with Caruso should read "O soave fanciulla" (427) and the record number should read 95200.

The Giovanni Martinelli entry reports that the tenor's Vitaphone soundtracks were "recorded by Victor on 16-inch discs" (420), but Victor did not record Vitaphone discs.

The first Victor Hayden (or Haydn) Quartet recordings were made in 1900, not 1903.

POSTSCRIPT

I asked Guy Marco for final comments, and he writes, "I thank Victrola and 78 Journal for printing these corrections for the Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States. I am not aware of a reference book in any field that has had the benefit of such scrutiny by specialist readers and a single tabulation of corrections. Obviously I am chagrined to find that so many mistakes appear in my book, even after page-by-page checking by experts on the advisory board. But it has been gratifying to hear from users of ERSUS about slips they discovered. The implication is that the work is of sufficient value to be adjusted for maximum utility. I wish to add that all of those who wrote to me noting errors did so with grace and collegiality."

For a postpaid copy of Marco's Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States, send \$125 to Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn NY 11226. His new fax number is 718-941-1408.

An Index to the Music Columns of *Hobbies Magazine*

BY RICHARD ARSENTY

When I wrote to Tim Gracyk about my work on an index to the music articles in *Hobbies* magazine, he offered to reproduce a sample year in V78J to elicit comments from readers. Below are a few paragraphs of introductory material and an explanation of the index format, followed by entries for the year 1951.

I first encountered *Hobbies* magazine about ten years ago when I ordered via interlibrary loan a series of articles on Bettini cylinder catalogs (edited by Aida Favia-Artsay in 1955-56). Over the years I must have ordered another dozen articles, based on citations I found in *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* and *Music Index*. But I soon realized that there were some shortcomings with these two indexing sources.

First was the lack of pagination detail. If an article in *Hobbies* actually appeared on pages 32-34, 37, 41, 48, 55, and 61, the indexes used the format 32-34+, the "+" indicating that the article was continued on following pages. While seemingly inconsequential, this format often created problems. For example, when ordering articles through ILL, I would often receive only pages 32-34 or those pages "plus" page 37, requiring the use of ILL several more times to get the remainder of the article. As a librarian, I can attest to the diligence and conscientiousness of my colleagues. But much of the mundane work in libraries is done by volunteers and students who are sometimes not as careful.

A second shortcoming of the two bibliographic sources was the depth of indexing they provided. Since *Music Index* and *Readers' Guide* cover hundreds of journals every month, and the process of indexing is both time-consuming and costly, it is understandable why a particular article from *Hobbies* cannot be placed under more than a couple of subject headings. However, this means that some major aspects of an article are not indexed, and it was not unusual for Jim Walsh (in his monthly column "Favorite

Pioneer Recording Artists") and Aida Favia-Artsay (in her "Historical Records" column) to begin an article on one subject, then switch to another topic for several paragraphs, or even pages, before returning to the initial subject. Almost invariably, these parenthetical digressions were not indexed.

A third deficiency I noticed was that short articles, some only a paragraph or two long, were never indexed. These articles included book and record reviews, obituaries, brief biographies, letters to columnists, and corrections to previous articles.

I decided to compile a complete, in-depth index to all the music articles that have appeared in *Hobbies* magazine since its inception in 1931.

The index is in a two-section format: a main entry section to hold all the bibliographic citations and annotations (each entered only once with a unique article identification number) and another section to hold all the index entries, using the identification numbers to refer back to the main entries. This format allows me to make the annotations as long as necessary in the main entry section with only a small increase in size in the index section. A side benefit of this format is that one can use the index for directly looking up specific names or for browsing through the main entries year by year.

Here are "rules" I am using to compile the index: 1) Every article, no matter how small, is to be indexed; 2) Every person, subject, or entity covered in more than a cursory way is to be indexed; 3) Every picture (of persons, phonographs, playbills, catalog pages, record labels, etc.) is to be indexed—many of these are unique; 4) Every addition or correction to a previous article (imperative for research) is to be indexed; 5) Every song or aria discussed at length in an article is to be indexed; brief references to musical selections are not indexed (there are literally thousands of these); 6) Every entry in the main section is to have an annotation appended.

Numerical data for the decade of the

1950s (already completed) will give some idea of how much information will appear in the final index: the main entry section consists of 24 double-column pages, the index section consists of 27 double-column pages with 1,049 personal names, 237 subject headings, 66 cross-references, and 2,215 citations to main entries. The completed index, covering the years 1931 through

1995, will be approximately 250 pages long. In addition to the material discussed above, it will have an introduction, a brief history of *Hobbies* magazine and the two long-running columns "Historical Records" (since 1933) and "Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists" (since 1941), as well as short biographical sketches of Aida Favia-Artsay, Jim Walsh, and other columnists.

Abbreviations and Symbols Used

- * contains information of more than a cursory nature
- ** full-length article or an extensive amount of information
- a&c additions and corrections to previous articles
- br book review
- bs biographical sketch (less than a full-length article but more than a brief mention)
- d discography
- let letter from a reader
- ob obituary
- p picture (generic term for photograph, portrait, drawing, etc.)
- rr recording review

Format of Main Entries

October 1954, v. 59:8

< Month, year, volume, and issue number.

5441. Historical Records: Mabel Garrison; Aida Favia-Artsay, 22-23, 26-27(p).

< Article identification number†, column heading, article title, author, pages (and picture note).

An interview with Mabel Garrison (p) about her life and career (includes discography). Recording review of historical repressing. American Gramophone Society. *Les Huguenots* (Meyerbeer) (p). *L'Eclair* (Halévy).

< Brief annotation about article.

5442. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Wizard of the Accordion Pietro Frosini [I]; Jim Walsh, 24-25, 28, 37 (p).

< Article identification number†, column heading, article title (plus note that this is the first part of a multi-part article), author, pages (and picture note).

Accordion music on records. Early career and recordings of Pietro Frosini (p).

< Brief annotation about article.

† The article identification number is made up of the last two digits of the year plus a number beginning with the first article in January ("01") and ending with the last article in December ("xx"). This helps to keep the index entries short and unique, as well as providing the user with an easy way of identifying the year of publication.

Format of Index Entries

ACCORDION MUSIC ON RECORDS

5309**, 5434**, 5442**

< Subject heading

< Citations to main entries (full-length articles)

AMERICAN GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY (A.G.S)

5318 (rr), 5341 (rr), 5402 (rr), 5441 (rr)

< Citations to main entries (recording reviews)

Frosini, Pietro (accordionist, vaudeville artist, composer)

5442** (p)

< Personal name heading

< Citation to main entry (a full-length article with one or more pictures)

Garrison, Mabel (soprano)

5441** (d, p, rr)

< Citation to main entry (a full-length article with a discography, picture(s), and a recording review)

Halévy, Jacques Fromental (composer)

L'Eclair - "Romance: Call me thine own"

5427 (rr), 5441 (rr)

MAIN ENTRY SECTION

January 1951, v. 55:11

5101. Historical Records: Eugenia Mantelli and Her Records; Albert Wolf, 18-19(p).

Short biography of Eugenia Mantelli (p). Zonophone Records (Universal Talking Machine Company).

5102. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Cal Stewart, Part I; Jim Walsh, 20-22, 35.

Early career and recordings of Cal Stewart. "Uncle Josh".

5103. Death of Frederic C. Freemantle; Jim Walsh, 35.

Frederic C. Freemantle (obituary).

5104. Music Box Collectors 2nd Meeting; 35.

Music boxes. Musical Box Hobbyists (club).

February 1951, v. 55:12

5105. Historical Records: In Re "The Future of Record Collecting"; Paul H. Little, 19.

Future of collecting 78 rpm discs (rebuttal to article in September 1950 issue). Sound quality of 78 rpm discs and 33 1/3 rpm long-playing discs.

5106. Historical Records: Secondary Rebuttal; Stephen Fassett, 19-20.

Comments on article 5105, above. Record-playing equipment (variable speed turntables).

5107. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Cal Stewart, Part II; Jim Walsh, 20-25(p).

Career and recordings of Cal Stewart (p) continued. "Uncle Josh". Len Spencer. Harry Spencer. Denman Thompson. "Aunt Nancy" (character first portrayed by Rossini Waugh, wife of Cal Stewart, later by Ada Jones).

5108. What to Look for When Purchasing a Music Box; Glenn P. Heckert, 25.

Music boxes (judging construction and quality).

March 1951, v. 56:1

5109. Historical Records: Eugenia Mantelli and Her Records; Albert Wolf, 18-19.

Eugenia Mantelli (discography). Zonophone Records (Universal Talking Machine Company).

5110. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Cal Stewart, Part III; Jim Walsh, 19-23(p).

Career and recordings of Cal Stewart (p) continued. "Uncle Josh". Andrew Keefe. Len Spencer. George Alexander.

5111. Another Record by Bert Williams; Jim Walsh, 23.

Addition of Bert Williams record to November 1950 article.

April 1951, v. 56:2

5112. **Historical Records:** RCA-Victor's Treasury of Immortal Performances; Stephen Fassett, 18-19.

LP recording review. RCA Victor. Enrico Caruso. Feodor Chaliapin. 25 other vocalists and pianists briefly mentioned.

5113. **Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists:** Cal Stewart, Part IV; Jim Walsh, 20-24.

Career and recordings of Cal Stewart concluded. "Uncle Josh". Byron G. Harlan.

5114. **Deaths of Marguerite Farrell and Eddie Morton "The Singing Policeman";** Jim Walsh, 24.

Marguerite Farrell (obituary). Eddie Morton (obituary).

5115. **Refinishing Music Boxes;** Marguerite Fabel, 24-25, 52.

Music boxes (refinishing).

5116. **Billy Whitlock, Famous English Recorder, Dies;** 25 (p).

Billy Whitlock (p, obituary).

5117. **Jefferson and Music;** 25.

Interest of Thomas Jefferson (American president) in music.

May 1951, v. 56:3

5118. **Historical Records:** RCA-Victor Treasury of Immortal Performances; Stephen Fassett, 18-19.

LP recording review. RCA Victor. John McCormack. 25 other vocalists, violinists and cellists briefly mentioned.

5119. **Historical Records:** The Only Collector Who Has Victor Monarch 5004?; M. J. Prospect, 19.

Rare record of Suzanne Adams exists. Eugenia Mantelli (correction to discography in article 5109, above).

5120. **Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists:** Frank Coombs and William H. Thompson; Jim Walsh, 20-23.

Careers and recordings of Frank Coombs and William H. Thompson. Lillian Nordica. Will Oakland.

June 1951, v. 56:4

5121. **Historical Records:** HMV Custom

Pressings; Stephen Fassett, 18.

HMV (Gramophone Company, Ltd.).

5122. **Historical Records:** LP Editions of Early De Luca and Bonci Recordings; Stephen Fassett, 18.

LP recording review. Giuseppe De Luca. Alessandro Bonci. Golden Age Recording Company.

5123. **Historical Records:** Ponselle Discoveries; Stephen Fassett, 18-19.

Historical repressings. Rosa Ponselle. *La Juive* - "Il va venir" (Halévy). *Lohengrin* - "Elsas Traum" (Wagner). John B. Secrist (record collector).

5124. **Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists:** Nat Wills, "The Happy Tramp"; Jim Walsh, 20-24(p).

Career and recordings of Nat M. Wills (p and discography).

5125. **Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists:** Information On William F. Myers; Jim Walsh, 24, 35.

William F. Myers (basso profundo).

July 1951, v. 56:5

5126. **Historical Records:** Playing Old Records on Modern Reproducers, Part I; Stephen Fassett, 18.

Record playing equipment.

5127. **Historical Records:** Decca Revives Great Singers' Records on LP; Stephen Fassett, 18-19.

LP recording review. Decca Records. Giuseppe De Luca. Lina Pagliughi. Conchita Supervia. Richard Tauber.

5128. **Deaths of Vesta Victoria and Edward Metcalfe;** Jim Walsh, 19.

Vesta Victoria (obituary). Edward Metcalfe (obituary).

5129. **Home Sweet Home** (from *Chamber's Journal*, March 15, 1884); 20, 35.

"Home Sweet Home" (song by John Howard Payne).

5130. **Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists:** Manuel Romain; Jim Walsh, 21-25.

Career and recordings of Manuel Romain.

August 1951, v. 56:6

5131. **Historical Records:** A Note on Polydor Records; Stephen Fassett, 26.

Polydor records (Deutsche Grammophon AG).

5132. Historical Records: Playing Old Records on Modern Reproducers, Part II; Stephen Fassett, 26-27.
Record playing equipment (styli and pickup cartridges).

5133. Historical Records: Pages from a 1924-25 Polydor Catalog, Part I; Stephen Fassett, 27.

Polydor records (Deutsche Grammophon AG). Alfred Farbach. John Glaser. Gunnar Graarud. Carl Gunther. Robert Hutt. Hermann Jadowker.

5134. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Elizabeth Spencer, [Part I]; Jim Walsh, 28-29(p).
Early career and recordings of Elizabeth Spencer (p).

5135. Yesterday's Juke-Box; Arthur H. Sanders, 30-32(p).
Music boxes (manufacture and operation).

September 1951, v. 56:7

5136. Historical Records: Playing Old Records on Modern Equipment, Part III; Stephen Fassett, 18.
Record playing equipment (styli and pickup cartridges).

5137. Historical Records: Pages from a 1924-25 Polydor Catalog, Part II; Stephen Fassett, 19.

Polydor records (Deutsche Grammophon AG). Hermann Jadowker. Walter Kirchhof. Eduard Lichtenstein. Julius Lieban. Otto Marak. Lauritz Melchior. Karl Aagaard Oestvig.

5138. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Elizabeth Spencer, [Part II]; Jim Walsh, 20-24(p).

Elizabeth Spencer (p). Edison artists (group photo): Marie Kaiser, Helen Clark, E. Eleanor Patterson, Charlotte Kirwan, Albert Farrington, Edward Meeker, Frederick Wheeler, John Young, Harvey Hindermeyer, Royal Fish, William F. Hooley, Vernon Archibald, John F. Burckhardt, Emory B. Randolph, Fred Rabenstein, Donald Chalmers, Robert A. Gayler, Eugene A. Jaudas, Harvey N. Emmons, Walter H. Miller, H. Voorhis, W. H. A. Cronkhite, Andy Weber, George Agnew. Walter Van Brunt. Edison Diamond Disc "Tone Tests". Vertical-cut discs.

5139. Copy of *Hobbies* Buried with Records in Roanoke's New Municipal Health Center; [Jim Walsh], 24.

Time capsule. Edison records.

5140. No John Bieling Day Party This September;

[Jim Walsh], 24.

John Bieling.

5141. Musical Box Hobbyists Convention; 24.
Music boxes. Musical Box Hobbyists (club).

5142. New York Library Demonstrates Old Records & Early Model Phonographs; [Jim Walsh], 24.
New York Public Library. Berliner Gramophone. Edison Amberola. Billy Murray.

5143. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Deaths of W. H. Berry, Lucy Gates, Dan Hornsby and Fannie B. Hard; Jim Walsh, 24.

Obituaries of W. H. Berry, Lucy Gates, Dan Hornsby, and Fannie B. Hard.

October 1951, v. 56:8

5144. Historical Records: Playing Old Records on Modern Reproducers, Part IV; Stephen Fassett, 18.

Record playing equipment (pickup arms and turntables).

5145. Historical Records: Pages from a 1924-25 Polydor Catalog, Part III; Stephen Fassett, 18-19.

Polydor records (Deutsche Grammophon AG). Tino Pattiera. Alfred Piccaver. Leo Slezak. Fritz Soot.

5146. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Charles W. Harrison & Beulah Gaylord Young; Jim Walsh, 20-21, 55 (p).

Careers and recordings of Charles W. Harrison (p) and Beulah Gaylord Young. Mary Jordan (p). Agnes Kimball (p). Royal Fish (p). Frederick Wheeler (p). Donald Chalmers (p). Edison Kinetophone motion pictures.

5147. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Death of Frederick James Wheeler, Famous Recording and Concert Baritone; Jim Walsh, 55.

Obituary of Frederick Wheeler.

November 1951, v. 56:9

5148. Historical Records: Giovanni Martinelli, [Part I]; John B. Richards, 18-19.

Early career of Giovanni Martinelli.

5149. Historical Records: Playing Old Records on Modern Reproducers, Part V; Stephen Fassett, 19.
Record playing equipment (amplifiers).

5150. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Walter Van Brunt (Walter Scanlan), Part I; Jim Walsh, 20-21, 25, 28-29(p).

Early career and recordings of Walter Van Brunt (p). Billy Murray. Ada Jones.

December 1951, v. 56:10

5151. Historical Records: Giovanni Martinelli, Part II; John B. Richards, 16-17.

Career and recordings of Giovanni Martinelli concluded. *Otello* (Verdi).

5152. Favorite Pioneer Recording Artists: Walter Van Brunt (Walter Scanlan), Part II; Jim Walsh, 18-19, 27.

Career and recordings of Van Brunt continued. "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" (song by Westendorf). Billy Murray.

INDEX SECTION

Adams, Suzanne (soprano)
5119

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO ARTICLES
5111

Agnew, George (recording technician)
5138 (p)

Alexander, George (baritone)
5110

Archibald, Vernon (baritone)
5138 (p)

Berry, W. H. (comedian)
5143 (ob)

Bieling, John (tenor)
John Bieling Day
5140

Bonci, Alessandro (tenor)
5122 (rr)

Caruso, Enrico (tenor)
5112 (rr)

Chaliapin, Feodor (bass)
5112 (rr)

Chalmers, Donald (bass)
5138 (p), 5146 (p)

Clark, Helen (mezzo-soprano)
5138 (p)

COLLECTING OF RECORDS - see RECORD COLLECTING (hobby)

Coombs, Frank (counter-tenor and vaudeville artist)
5120**

CORRECTIONS - see ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO ARTICLES

Cronkhite, W. H. A. (recording director)
5138 (p)

DECCA RECORDS
5127 (rr)

De Luca, Giuseppe (baritone)
5122 (rr), 5127 (rr)

EDISON, THOMAS A., INCORPORATED
"Tone Tests" (Diamond Discs)
5138

EDISON KINETOPHONE MOTION PICTURES
5146 (p)

Emmons, Harvey N. (recording engineer)
5138 (p)

Farbach, Alfred (tenor)
5133

Farrell, Marguerite (soprano and vaudeville artist)
5114 (ob)

Farrington, Albert (baritone)
5138 (p)

Fish, Royal (tenor)
5138 (p), 5146 (p)

Freemantle, Frederic C. (tenor)
5103 (ob)

Gates, Lucy (soprano)
5143 (ob)

Gayler, Robert A. (pianist)
5138 (p)

Glaser, John (tenor)
5133

GOLDEN AGE RECORDS
5122 (rr)

GRAMOPHONE COMPANY, LTD.
HMV (His Master's Voice) "Custom" Pressings
5121

Gunther, Carl (tenor)
5133

Halévy, Jacques Fromental (composer)
La Juive - "Il va venir"
5123

Hard, Fannie B. (soprano)
5143 (ob)

Harlan, Byron G. (tenor and comedian)
5113

Harrison, Charles W. (tenor)
5146** (p)

Hindermeyer, Harvey (tenor and ballad singer)
5138 (p)

HISTORICAL REPRESSINGS (from original matrices)
5121, 5123

HMV (His Master's Voice) - *see* GRAMOPHONE COMPANY,
LTD.

"Home Sweet Home" (song) - *see* Payne, John Howard

Hooley, William F. (bass and comic singer)
5138 (p)

Hornsby, Dan (comic singer)
5143 (ob)

Hutt, Robert (tenor)
5133

"I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" (song) - *see* Westendorf,
Thomas

Jadlowker, Hermann (tenor)
5133, 5137

Jaudas, Eugene A. (violinist)
5138 (p)

Jefferson, Thomas (American president)
5117

Joken, Carl (tenor)
5137

Jones, Ada (soprano and comic singer)
5150

Jordan, Mary (mezzo-soprano)
5146 (p)

Kaiser, Marie (soprano)
5138 (p)

Keefe, Andrew (comic singer and comedian)
5110

Kimball, Agnes (soprano)
5146 (p)

Kirchhof, Walter (tenor)
5137

Kirwan, Charlotte (soprano)
5138 (p)

Lichtenstein, Eduard (tenor)
5137

Mantelli, Eugenia (mezzo-soprano)
5101* (bs, p), 5109* (d), 5119 (a&c)

Marak, Otto (tenor)
5137

Martinelli, Giovanni (tenor)
5148*, 5151*, 5221

McCormack, John (tenor)
5118 (rr)

Meeker, Edward (singer, comedian, announcer)
5138 (p)

Melchior, Lauritz (tenor)
5137

Metcalf, Edward (ballad singer and vaudeville artist)
5128 (ob)

Miller, Walter H. (recording manager)
5138 (p)

Morton, Eddie ("The Singing Policeman") (comic singer)
5114 (ob)

Murray, Billy (tenor and comic singer)
5150, 5152

MUSIC BOXES

5104, 5108*, 5115**, 5135** (p), 5141

Myers, William F. (basso profundo)
5125*

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
5142

Nordica, Lillian (soprano)
5120

Oakland, Will (counter-tenor, ballad singer)
5120

OBITUARIES

Berry, W. H. (comedian)
5143

Farrell, Marguerite (soprano, vaudeville artist)
5114

Freemantle, Frederic C. (tenor)
5103

Gates, Lucy (soprano)
5143

Hard, Fannie B. (soprano)
5143

Hornsby, Dan (comic singer)
5143

Metcalf, Edward (ballad singer and vaudeville artist)
5128

Morton, Eddie (comic singer)
5114

Victoria, Vesta (singer and comedienne)
5128

Wheeler, Frederick (baritone)
5147

Whitlock, Billy (British music hall artist)
5116

Pagliughi, Lina (soprano)
5127 (rr)

Patterson, E. Eleanor (contralto)
5138 (p)

Pattiera, Tino (tenor)
5145

Payne, John Howard (actor, playwright and composer)
"Home Sweet Home" (song)
5129*

Piccaver, Alfred (tenor)
5145

POLYDOR RECORDS (DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON AG)
5131*, 5133*, 5137*, 5145*

Ponselle, Rosa (soprano)
5123 (rr)

Rabenstein, Fred (____)
5138 (p)

Randolph, Emory B. (tenor)
5138 (p)

RCA VICTOR RECORDS
5112 (rr), 5118 (rr)

RECORD COLLECTING (hobby)
5105*, 5106*

RECORD PLAYING EQUIPMENT

General Information
5126*

Amplifiers
5149*

Pickup Arms
5144*

Styli and Pickup Cartridges
5132*, 5136*

Turntables, Variable Speed
5106, 5144*

RECORDING REVIEWS

Long-playing Discs (33.3 rpm and 45 rpm)

"Alessandro Bonci" (Golden Age Recording 101)
5122

"Caruso" (RCA LCT-1007)
5112

"Caruso Sings Light Music" (RCA LCT-2)
5112

"Chaliapin as Boris" (RCA LCT-3)
5112

- "Genius at the Keyboard" (RCA LCT-1000)
5112
- "Giuseppe De Luca" (Golden Age Recording 100)
5122
- "Giuseppe De Luca - Italian Art Songs" (Decca DL-7505)
5127
- "Golden Age at the Metropolitan" (RCA LCT-1006)
5112
- "Golden [Age] Duets" (RCA LCT-1004)
5118
- "Golden Voices Sing Light Music" (RCA LCT-1008)
5118
- "Lina Pagliughi - Operatic Recital" (Decca DL-7503)
5127
- "Magic Strings" (RCA LCT-1002)
5118
- "Richard Tauber - An Operatic Recital" (Decca DL-8512)
5127
- "Sacred Songs" (RCA LCT-1005)
5118
- "Wagner" (RCA LCT-1001)
5118

**REPRESSINGS OF ORIGINAL MATRICES - see
HISTORICAL RE-PRESSINGS**

- Romain, Manuel** (tenor and vaudeville artist)
5130**
- Scanlan, Walter** - *see* Van Brunt, Walter
- Secrist, John B.** (record collector)
5123
- Slezak, Leo** (tenor)
5145
- Spencer, Elizabeth** (mezzo-soprano and ballad singer)
5134** (p), 5138**
- Spencer, Harry** (comedian)
5107
- Spencer, Len** (baritone, ballad singer and comedian)
5107, 5110
- Stewart, Cal** (humorist and portrayer of "Uncle Josh")
5102**, 5107** (p), 5110** (p), 5113**
- Supervia, Conchita** (mezzo-soprano)
5127 (rr)
- Tauber, Richard** (tenor)
5127 (rr)

Thompson, Denman (actor and humorist)
5107

Thompson, William H. (baritone and vaudeville artist)
5120**

"Uncle Josh" - *see* Stewart, Cal

Van Brunt, Walter [Walter Scanlan] (tenor and comic singer)
5138, 5150** (p), 5152**

**VARIABLE-SPEED TURNTABLE - see RECORD PLAYING
EQUIPMENT - Turntables**

Verdi, Giuseppe (composer)
Otello
5151

Victoria, Vesta (singer and comedienne)
5128 (ob)

Voorhis, H. (recording technician)
5138 (p)

Wagner, Richard (composer)
Lohengrin - "Elsas Traum"
5123 (rr)

Weber, Andy (Edison staff member)
5138 (p)

Westendorf, Thomas P. (composer)
"I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" (song)
5152*

Wheeler, Frederick (baritone)
5138 (p), 5146 (p), 5147 (ob)

Whitlock, Billy (British music hall artist)
5116 (ob, p)

Williams, Bert (vaudeville singer and comedian)
5111 (a&c)

Wills, Nat M. ("The Happy Tramp") (comedian)
5124** (d, p)

Young, John (tenor)
5138 (p)

ZONOPHONE RECORDS (Universal Talking Machine Co.)
5101*, 5109*

NEW CD: *Swinging Down The Lane*

Isham Jones And His Orchestra* *Memphis Archives MA7014

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

This wonderful Isham Jones Orchestra CD features 18 selections, some as early as 1923, others as late as 1930, about half from the acoustic era, half from the electric.

I must disclose that I have been so impressed with Memphis Archives CDs reissuing notable artists ignored by other companies—examples include Morton Harvey, Olive Kline, Slim Lamar, Paul Tremaine, W.C. Handy, Irving Kaufman, pianist Mike Bernard, Belle Baker, Vess Ossman—that recently I offered to write CD notes. We have finished work on a CD that reissues all recordings of Jim Europe's 369th U.S. Infantry "Hellfighters" Band. I do not accept payment. I plan to review Memphis Archives CDs in the future since V78J readers should know about new releases, and being on the company payroll would prohibit me from writing such reviews.

I like everything about this new Jones CD—the selections, undoctored sound, artwork—though I must quibble with the CD's subtitle. One never finds the name "Isham Jones and His Orchestra" on a label of this period but instead finds "Isham Jones Orchestra" or, on a few early discs, "Isham Jones Rainbo Orchestra." It is similar to never finding "Carl Fenton and His Orchestra" on Brunswick discs, only "Carl Fenton's Orchestra" (Carl Fenton is the pronounceable pseudonym for Walter "Gus" Haenschen, manager of Brunswick's popular division, though the name "Carl Fenton" was later sold). If any company is likely to issue a Carl Fenton's Orchestra CD—or Gene Rodemich, or Ray Miller, or Original Memphis Five—that company is Memphis Archives.

Most performances here are from 1924 through 1926. They admirably represent the orchestra's sound, with many songs composed by Jones himself. When the CD shifts from acoustic performances to electric, the change is noticeable.

Sound is not great for the CD's December 1925 selections, largely because Brunswick's early "Light Ray" electrical recording process was second-rate.

The CD opens with the January 1923 "Farewell Blues," recorded by Jones a few months after the New Orleans Rhythm Kings introduced the song on Gennett 4966. This is the Isham Jones Orchestra at its hottest, the band having one advantage over N.O.R.K. in that the Brunswick sound was superior to Gennett's.

The second selection is Handy's "Memphis Blues," recorded in January 1923. Months earlier, in August 1922, Victor had issued the Virginians performing this. I have heard friends cite this as evidence that Brunswick by this time had come to view Jones as its answer to Victor's popular Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra—and to Whiteman's offshoot band, the Virginians—but I do not see Jones and Whiteman as sharing much aside from being viewed by their respective companies as that label's premiere bandleader. It is true that Jones recorded "The Japanese Sandman" and "Whispering" in October 1920, but in selecting such titles he could not have been influenced by Whiteman's successful disc featuring the same songs since Victor 18690 was not issued until November 1920.

The Isham Jones Orchestra was a Chicago institution. The band was also a Brunswick phenomenon, from mid-1920 to 1932 recording exclusively and frequently for Brunswick, from the company's entry into the American disc market until after the Warner Brothers acquisition. In short, Chicago-based Brunswick and Jones matured together. He switched to Victor in 1932, then to Decca in 1934, with Woody Herman joining for Decca sessions, but these changes are outside this CD's range.

Jones led one of the most tasteful, refined dance bands of the era. William Howland Kenney

THAT'S JAZZ

Words by
OLE OLSEN

SONG

Music by
ISHAM JONES

Moderato

The musical score for 'That's Jazz' is presented in two systems. The first system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef, containing a piano introduction marked 'Moderato' and 'f' (forte). The second system is a single staff with a treble clef, containing the vocal melody. The lyrics are written below the notes: 'You ask me what it is the Band is play - ing / The drum-mer bobs a-round and does a wig - gle'. The tempo 'Moderato' is indicated above the first system, and the dynamic 'p' (piano) is indicated above the first note of the vocal melody.

states in his 1993 book Chicago jazz that Jones "refused to label his music 'jazz,'" preferring "that his music be called 'American Dance Music.'" Kenney's source is a 1924 issue of Etude. I agree that Jones' was not a jazz band, hot performances notwithstanding, but I find in the September 1923 issue of the sheet music publication Melody that Jones spoke of his music as jazz. If Jones rejected the term "jazz" and embraced "American Dance Music," it happened around 1924. The 1923 article cites Jones' advice for those who wish "to start a jazz band of your own," beginning with this tip: "First of all, you must have musicians—real musicians...Gone are the days when a jazz band was an aggregation of jugglers who gave more pleasure to the eye than to the ear."

The CD's notes are well-written, accurate—and brief. Aside from stating that Jones was born on January 31, 1894, in Coalton, Ohio, the notes give no details about Jones' early life. Since the information is not widely available, I will share here my own research on Jones' early years.

Jones was born in Ohio but grew up in Saginaw, Michigan. According to the 1923 Melody article (itself based on an interview Jones gave the Boston Post), he worked in coal mines leading blind mules. Jones' father, originally from Arkansas, played fiddle and was an important musical influence. The son took up fiddling and led a small band at a local Methodist church. He even played fiddle at work while driving his mule with its string of coal cars. His attention to his in-

strument evidently distracted him enough one day for a train to crash into a shaft door, frightening him so much that he never returned to the coal pit. He devoted himself to music. A Saginaw music publisher was the first to print sheet music bearing Jones' name.

Isham, pronounced "eye-sham," moved to Chicago in 1915 and continued composing. Frank Powers recently sent to V78J a copy of sheet music from 1917 featuring an early Jones' composition that is one of the first songs to refer to the new music called "jass." Actually, Jones' spelling is even more unorthodox. The song is "That's Jaz!" Possibly the songwriter had not seen the word "jazz" (or "jass") in print when he wrote the song. Jones' lyrics refer to saxophones and banjos, so the composer did not have the ODJB specifically in mind though he no doubt knew the sensation the ODJB made in Chicago in 1916. Jones may have been referring to his own band of musicians.

Mike Montgomery sent to V78J a 1918 composition by Isham Jones titled "Indigo Blues," which was recorded by Ford Dabney's Band in early 1919 (issued as Aeolian-Vocalion 12097 in April). Backed by the ODJB's "Oriental Jazz," this is probably the first recording of an Isham Jones tune. I say this because Talking Machine World lists not only soon-to-be-issued discs but cites most composers, and Jones does not appear earlier than the March 1919 issue. (Care to know the first Cole Porter tune on disc? TMW shows that Joseph C. Smith's version of Porter's "I've A Shooting Box In

Scotland" was issued by Victor in April, 1917.)

After serving in the military in 1918, Jones returned to Chicago and joined a dance hall orchestra that would eventually take his name. He learned C-melody saxophone at this time but switched to tenor saxophone by 1920. Eventually conducting pressures forced him to give up playing in the band itself though his band always featured a strong saxophone section.

According to the Melody profile, Jones and his musicians were given the option in the early '20s of royalties or steady salaries. Jones himself opted for royalties and by September 1923 had received \$800,000. Jones was rich before penning his most successful compositions.

The name on early discs, "Isham Jones Rainbo Orchestra," reflects the band's engagement at Chicago's famous dance palace known as the Rainbo Gardens, at the intersection of North Clark St. and Lawrence Avenue (Frank Westphal next followed Jones, recording his Rainbo Orchestra in Chicago by early 1922—Ralph Williams followed with his Rainbo Orchestra in late 1924). One thing I miss when listening to CDs is examining labels of 78s and memorizing which of the early Jones discs were issued on Brunswick's early prestigious "purple" label, which began at 5000. Some titles were issued on the prestige label as well as Brunswick's ordinary popular label, such as Jones doing "Look For The Silver Lining," issued as Brunswick 5045 and 2224. Nonetheless, I am sometimes happy to forego the joy of touching

original discs for the convenience of using a remote control while playing CDs.

Band members on the early tracks of this CD include Carroll Martin on trombone, Jones on tenor sax, Leo Murphy on violin, Al Eldridge on piano, Charles McNeill on banjo, John Kuhn on tuba, and Joe Frank on drums. Fewer instruments were used than on Victor discs of this period featuring Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra.

The band would soon take up residency at the Hotel Sherman's College Inn, remaining as its sole attraction until February 1925, when a band led by Vincent Lopez replaced Jones'. I'll stop here. The CD notes give sufficient details for Jones' career after 1927.

This CD will please those who admire this prolific composer and this notable band. I should warn that it does not feature the incredibly popular "Wabash Blues" from late 1921. However, the "laughing" cornet of Louis Panico, who joined the ensemble around mid-1921, is featured on several of the CD's tracks. Panico would leave the band in a couple of years to begin his own band at Chicago's Guyon's Paradise. I recall Doc Cheatham saying in Stanley Dance's The World Of Swing that Panico was the first trumpet player he liked—one reminder of Panico's popularity in those years!

For a postpaid copy of Swinging Down The Lane, send \$15.49 to Memphis Archives, P.O. Box 171282, Memphis TN 38187. Phone is (901) 682-2063.

INDIGO BLUES

FOX TROT

ISHAM JONES

Not too fast



The first Isham Jones tune recorded? Ford Dabney recorded it for Aeolian-Vocalion. When issued in April 1919, it was backed by the ODJB's "Oriental Jazz"—recorded in late 1917! A rare disc.

NEW CD: Francesco Tamagno, The Complete Recordings, 1903-1904

Symposium 1186/87

Reviewed By David A. Banks

Conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, towards the end of his career, said he heard only two true heldentenors in his time: Lauritz Melchior and Francesco Tamagno. The latter was an authentic tenore di forza or heldentenor, a type of voice rarely encountered. Those who saw Tamagno perform marveled at the stentorian magnitude of his voice. It was clarion with a rapid vibrato that gave dramatic intensity. Consider how effective the voice is on recordings made 93 years ago—and then imagine what it must have been like in an opera house!

Symposium's new Francesco Tamagno, The Complete Recordings: 1903-1904 consists of two CDs. They come with an informative booklet featuring a biography and analysis by Professor Stanley Henig. This is followed by a history of Tamagno's recording career and comments on the records by Dr. Paul D. Lewis. Also included is a complete discography by matrix number and title (including discs which have not survived). Finally, there is a list by opera, selection title, take and matrix number of the recordings on this CD set.

This is not the first CD compilation of Tamagno recordings. In 1990 Opal released a single CD of Tamagno's complete published recordings (CD 9846), with three previously unpublished discs making a total of 22 selections. Symposium's new set has 35 selections on 2 CDs, which includes all surviving alternate takes and unpublished discs. Six tracks were provided by Historic Masters Ltd., one by Michael Bott and one by David Fitzgerald. Ten tracks were provided by the Yale Collection of Historical Sound Recordings.

Included is the creator role disc "Dei del patrio suol" from Isadore De Lara's Messaline. Yale has the only known copy. It was previously released on Treasures From Yale's Historical Sound Recordings Collection (Yale University Library P-1993). Engineers for the latter CD used a restoration process. The idea was to improve the sound in an audio ambience suggesting the spaciousness

of a modern studio recording. I prefer Symposium's direct, undoctored sound. All discs on the Symposium set were transferred with great care and excellent sonic results.

Tamagno's place in music history was assured when he sang in the premiers of Giuseppe Verdi's revised versions of Simon Boccanegra and Don Carlo. He then created the title role in Verdi's operatic masterpiece, Otello. After witnessing Tamagno's performance in Otello, music critic W.J. Henderson wrote, "His interpretation of the jealous Moor was one of the masterpieces of the modern stage. Only Salvini could vie with it in poignant despair or in puissant passion." Italian actor Tomasso Salvini was considered the greatest Othello of his era on the legitimate stage.

When Verdi and his librettist Arrigo Boito considered tenors for the lead in Otello, Tamagno seemed the obvious choice though we learn from William Weaver's The Verdi-Boito Correspondence that the composer initially had doubts. What about scenes requiring pianissimo singing? Verdi wrote to Boito, "I do not believe that [Tamagno] could express effectively that brief melody, 'And you, how pale you are' and still less 'A kiss, another kiss...'"

Verdi's letter surprised me. I have always considered Tamagno's singing of these lines from Otello's death scene to be among the treasures of recorded performances. Verdi's melody is heart breaking when sung in the original Italian ("E tu...come sei pallida! e stanca, e muta, e bella"). When Tamagno, after a rest of a sixteenth, sings "e bella," he colors the tone in a way that simultaneously conveys passion, tenderness, and grief. This is great singing and great acting. Does he observe Verdi's dynamic marking, PP? Perhaps not, but Tamagno so colors his voice that I am almost persuaded that he is singing softly. When I hear Verdi's music for the words "un bacio...un bacio ancora...ah!...un altro bacio" ("a kiss, again a kiss, ah, and yet another kiss"), it is Tamagno's

voice that echoes in my mind, notwithstanding the handful of other great Otellos in this century.

In the book Tamagno, The Greatest Vocal Phenomenon Of The Nineteenth Century, Mario Corsi shows Verdi, in shaping the tenor's portrayal of the Moor, as not confined to musical interpretation. Corsi writes, "Verdi had already projected in his mind the scenic action and effects, verse by verse and word by word, for the drama he had set to music. Above everything else, he asked for the greatest naturalness...Verdi kept his eye on Tamagno continually while playing the score from the piano, trying to tone down movements or gestures he thought too vigorous or unsuitable."

We learn from Corsi that Tamagno's seven year old daughter often accompanied her father to rehearsals and made herself useful: "Tamagno continued to study and work on the death scene, even having his little girl serve as Desdemona in the strangling bit!" At last, the composer himself showed Tamagno how it should be done: "Verdi decided to demonstrate to Tamagno the way the death scene should be played according to his conception, and the seventy-four year old composer became a great tragic actor, rolling down the three steps from Desdemona's bed as if truly dead, and with such convincing artistry that those present were momentarily frightened, thinking Verdi had suffered a heart attack!"

The tenor benefited from Verdi's coaching. Corsi writes that Tamagno had been transformed from a lump of carbon into a diamond, and thereafter the tenor brought a new sensitivity to his other roles. Listen to the recording of "O muto asil" from Rossini's Guillaume Tell, another treasured performance. This is tender, moving bel canto that fully conveys the text's meaning. For all the comments about the volume of Tamagno's voice, this disc and others reveal a singer who made his points with control and subtle restraint. Tamagno is often subdued in passages that other singers bellow and blast.

His recordings are not without their anomalies. His slow and deliberately paced "Ora e per sempre" from Otello is at odds with the

score. Suspecting Desdemona of having an affair, Otello cannot rest until he has confirmation of her guilt, his peace of mind gone. In the 1938 Metropolitan Opera broadcast, Giovanni Martinelli sings this with mounting rage and despair, conductor Ettore Panizza making the orchestral accompaniment throb like blood coursing through veins in the Moor's temples. The latter performance is intensely dramatic and conforms to our expectations.

Set Verdi's score aside and forget other recordings. Accept Tamagno's versions of "Ora e per sempre" on their own terms, all four takes. With diction always clear, he subtly varies delivery in these takes. Like all great singers, he took dramatic cues from the words as well as the music. We know from reviews and hear on the records that his performances never lapsed into routine. The four takes of "Ora e per sempre" remind me of an actor exploring alternate readings of a text.

In the first take, Tamagno adopts a sad and reflective tone, quite appropriate for the aria's opening line, which can be translated as "Now and forever farewell, sacred memories." Plaintively sung is "Della gloria d'Otello é questo il fin" ("Otello's glory is ended"). In each take he sings an unwritten turn on the aria's final "questo." In the Met broadcast Martinelli does something similar, making his voice crack on the word--just short of a sob.

Tamagno's second take is more dramatic, his tone menacing, as if to stress that someone will pay for Otello's distress. The third take mixes drama and reflection, with a note of sorrow creep-



This image is in Victor catalogs up to 1923.

ing into the tone when he sings "Addio, vessillo trionfale e pio" ("Farewell, banner of triumph and duty"). Otello's heart was clearly in his duty. Passages like this reveal Tamagno's artistry and refute criticisms that he was merely a peasant with a huge voice.

The fourth take is my favorite. The voice is very well recorded and hits the high Bb in the final line with more security than in other takes. No doubt this rang out like a bell in opera houses. On each take, the accompanist on piano make errors. Are Tamagno's slow tempos the result of a struggling pianist unable to handle anything fast?

The second CD in this set, offering a bonus of a different kind, includes two recordings that have long puzzled discographers. They are 1903 Gramophone test pressings of an unidentified baritone who sings "O casto fior" from Massenet's *Il Re Di Lahore* as well as Filippo Filippi's song "Perche?" The baritone sounds elderly but is first rate. The matrix numbers for both discs are interposed with Tamagno's but no documentation exists for these pressings. Some think the baritone is Antonio Cotogni, who gets the billing on this CD set, but other candidates have been suggested, including Tamagno's brother, Giovanni. He was a baritone and had a brief stage career but gave it up. It is nice to have these two recordings, given

their mysterious Tamagno connection.

I am grateful that Symposium issued this set, especially for issuing all alternate takes and unpublished discs. It takes two CDs for everything Tamagno recorded, the second CD being short. The CDs come packaged in a slim dual sided storage case, which I stress in case someone picks up the Symposium set in a store and concludes there is only one CD. Symposium should state more clearly on the cover that two CDs are included.

When Pearl issued its Adelina Patti CD, alternate takes were not included (this is in contrast to the EMI/Electrola/Da Capo LP set that contains all of Patti's recordings). I think singers of this caliber and historic importance deserve nothing less than the full treatment Symposium gives Tamagno here. With excellent sound restoration and proper playing speeds, this Tamagno set is definitive. The singer's biographer, Mario Corsi, wrote, "Whoever heard Tamagno, even once, never forgot it. A more powerful and expressive voice had never been heard."

For a postpaid copy of Francesco Tamagno, The Complete Recordings, 1903-1904 (Symposium 1186/87), send \$37.50 to Norbeck & Peters, PO Box 4, Woodstock NY 12498-0004. Or phone (800) 654-5302. Fax is (914) 679-6904.

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Ad for Talk-O-Photo Records in the September 1920 issue of The Talking Machine World.

NEW CD: *A Ragtime Primer*

PianoMania CD-123

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

When I moved to Roseville last year, I had no idea that Rocklin, a small town bordering mine, is a mecca for ragtime pianists and enthusiasts. It is home to a company that specializes in new recordings of "popular" piano compositions. Many who collect old recordings will appreciate knowing that works by composers of yesteryear are available on various PianoMania CDs. Composers are as varied as Joseph Lamb, Ford Dabney, Roy Bargy, Zez Confrey, Muriel Pollack.

Today's best ragtime pianists travel to Rocklin to sit at the 7'6" Yamaha DC7-F in PianoMania's studio. They make CDs and give local concerts. To list all who record for PianoMania is to compile a Who's Who of contemporary ragtime pianists and composers.

The company's new A Ragtime Primer should interest most V78J readers. I duplicate below the CD's selections and performers. Most of the pianists' names will be known to those familiar with contemporary ragtime performance. This CD is worth singling out because, first, an incredible range of ragtime genres is covered. Second, many different--and notable--pianists perform.

The title, A Ragtime Primer, is worth analyzing. Such a title suggests the CD's goal is to instruct. A primer is a textbook (originally a prayer book) and the word is usually associated with books that teach children to read and write. "Primer" is not used much by educators today, but it was common during ragtime's heyday, which I

A RAGTIME PRIMER

Volume One

*An Introduction To The Basic Styles Of Ragtime
Performed By Ragtime's Leading Pianists*

Styles Of Ragtime	Composer	Pianist
Folk		
1. Harlem Rag	Tom Turpin	Trebor Tichenor
2. Tickled To Death	Charles Hunter	David Thomas Roberts
3. Dixie Queen	Robert Hoffman	Trebor Tichenor
4. Texas Rag	Callis W. Jackson	David Thomas Roberts
Classic		
5. Sunflower Slow Drag	Scott Joplin/Hayden	Scott Kirby
6. Hilarity Rag	James Scott	Frank French
7. Cottontail Rag	Joseph Lamb	Scott Kirby
Popular		
8. At A Georgia Camp Meeting	Kerry Mills	Richard Zimmerman
9. Black And White Rag	George Botsford	John Gill
10. Waiting For The Robert E. Lee	John Muir	Richard Zimmerman
11. The Georgia Grind	Ford Dabney	Tex Wyndham
12. Sunshine Capers	Roy Bargy	Elliott Adams
13. Kitten On The Keys	Zez Confrey	Max Morath
14. Memphis Blues	W.C. Handy	Richard Zimmerman
15. Rooster Rag	Muriel Pollock	Max Morath
Eastern Ragtime		
16. Charleston Rag	Eubie Blake	Morten Gunnar Larsen
17. Steeplechase Rag	James P. Johnson	Max Morath
Jelly Roll Morton		
18. Perfect Rag	Jelly Roll Morton	Morten Gunnar Larsen
19. King Porter Stomp	Jelly Roll Morton	Morten Gunnar Larsen
New Ragtime		
20. Through The Bottomlands	David Thomas Roberts	Composer
21. Polyragmic	Max Morath	Composer
22. Belle Of Louisville	Frank French	Composer

date from 1899 to 1919—from Scott Joplin's first published rags to Jim Europe's death. So "primer" is appropriate in that sense. To remind us that this is a primer, the CD cover features a turn-of-the-century schoolhouse before which stand children.

We need not take the title too literally. When opening a schoolhouse primer, one expects "The cat sat on the mat"—something simple for beginners. Playing this CD is analogous to opening a primer and finding works by Shakespeare, Robert Browning, and Ezra Pound. In short, there is nothing simple about the musical numbers here, and styles are very different.

Famous rags are mixed with obscure works of the past and with modern ragtime compositions. Callis W. Jackson and Robert Hoffman? These ragtime composers of nearly a century ago are not even mentioned in Blesh and Janis' They All Played Ragtime. However, the CD notes give relevant biographical information (as does David Jasen and Trebor Tichenor's book Rags And Ragtime). Jackson's "Texas Rag" and Hoffman's "Dixe Queen" are classified under the "folk" rubric.

The CD is subtitled "An Introduction To the Basic Styles of Ragtime" and opens with Tom Turpin's "Harlem Rag," the first rag to be published that was written by a black composer. It was copyrighted in December 1897. A "folk" rag? I listen without worrying much about categories. "Mississippi Rag" by white composer William H. Krell was published earlier in the year, and I wish the CD had also included this, but Richard Zimmerman performs it on a CD titled The Roots Of Ragtime (also in PianoMania's growing catalog), so it is available for those who seek a performance of the first published rag.

Scott Joplin is represented by one composition and Jelly Roll Morton by two. Is it so easy to categorize Joplin as someone who composed, along with others, in a "classic" style—and then to imply that Jelly Roll Morton defies categories? Morton's two works are listed under the non-category "Jelly Roll Morton." Anyway, Joplin is represented here with the eloquent "Sunflower Slow Drag," published in 1901 but written (with

student Scott Hayden) by 1899. An unusual choice for a ragtime "primer," it is delightful.

Viewing "Memphis Blues" as representing a "popular" rag style is difficult, but the notes justify its inclusion on the CD, and certainly listeners need a break at this point from the frantic syncopation of preceding numbers. Richard Zimmerman's wistful rendition of Handy's classic reminds me that, decades ago, Jim Europe also played it at a slow pace. Hearing Europe at the piano play "Memphis Blues" slowly, Irene and Vernon Castle improvised dance steps and the fox trot was born, or so Irene would claim years afterwards. Jim Europe himself is quoted in the New York Tribune as saying, "The fox trot was created by a young negro of Memphis, Tenn., Mr. W.C. Handy, who five years ago wrote 'The Memphis Blues.'... Mr. Castle has generously given me credit for the fox trot, yet the credit...really belongs to Mr. W.C. Handy." Zimmerman plays "Memphis Blues" the way I imagine Europe might have.

By closing with works of three contemporary ragtime composers, this CD posits that ragtime is evolving as an art form. With old



Zez Confrey recorded this for Brunswick in the year "Kitten" was published. The Diamond Disc, also from 1921, has a richer sound. The CD features a 1995 performance—superb sound!

works and new on the same CD, listeners can do comparison and contrast. They should ask themselves, "Will these new rags stand the test of time? Are these modern composers—David Thomas Roberts, Max Morath, Frank French—the Joplin, Lamb, and Scott of today?" I confess David Thomas Roberts' "Through the Bottomlands," written in 1980, has some Chopin-esque passages that make me wonder how far ragtime can evolve and still remain ragtime.

Frank French's "Belle of Louisville," the CD's closing track, is as impressive as anything from earlier decades. French's *tour de force* reminds me how wrong Scott Joplin was to insist that "it is never right to play Ragtime fast." It may be true for Joplin's own rags, but fast can be fun.

Included is a 26 page book that defines and analyzes ragtime. Richard Zimmerman wrote the eloquent six page "Introduction." It is not clear who wrote the "Notes To The Music." No byline gives credit the way the Introduction is credited to Zimmerman. The name "Trebor J. Tichenor" sits between some paragraphs on page 18—no preposition "by," no special font. Did he write the preceding dozen pages or only the preceding paragraph? The phrase "David Thomas Roberts March, 1995" appears two pages later. Did Roberts write the notes? (I wish whoever typed them had been more careful. Erratic punctuation, inconsistent capitalization—sometimes "Jazz," sometimes "jazz"—and missing apostrophes are distracting.)

Zimmerman makes the interesting point that ragtime "was almost exclusively music composed and played by young people, both male and female, for other people primarily in their teens and twenties. It was the first time that young people had their own music..." I'll add that if phonograph discs had been within the spending means of more teens in, say, 1910, then even more ragtime would have been recorded. It is because mostly older people had the incomes to buy discs in the early decades of the century that songs like "Silver Threads Among The Gold" were recorded so often. Teens enthusiastic about ragtime could more easily afford sheet music.

Most numbers featured on this CD would have been recorded in the early 78 RPM era had

technology decades ago been able to do these piano works justice. A few were recorded. Because I know Zez Confrey's recordings of "Kitten On The Keys," I notice small liberties Max Morath takes with Confrey's gem, such as with tempo. Most pianists here are very faithful to composers' intentions. The nimble Morten Gunnar Larsen may not play "King Porter Stomp" exactly as Jelly Roll Morton did, but that composer never recorded it the same way twice, so knowing his intentions is difficult (perhaps he does defy categories).

I am surprised that Scott Kirby plays here two pensive rags. A recent concert convinced me that Kirby, who seems fascinated by the ways that rhythms imported a century ago from Haiti, Brazil, and Argentina influenced ragtime composers, prizes what is exotic in ragtime. I expected him to tackle tunes that are rhythmically unconventional, but he does a superb job with Joplin and Lamb.

Performances are polished, nearly each one a joy to hear. Played too perfectly? These are Disklavier performances, or ragtime recorded in a computer age. I'll avoid a technical explanation except to say that if a mistake is made during a performance, high technology allows the player to return to specific passages during playback for changes. Whether performances on this CD have been "doctored," I cannot say—perhaps not, since I know most pianists here can perform flawlessly during concerts. Anyway, when the computer has "saved" a perfect performance, the computer then plays the piano, and this is what we hear on the CD. It is a full sound—the product of today's best technology—but some may detect a slightly mechanical execution. I spend much time hearing Ampico reproducing pianos (not quite the same, of course), so I am comfortable with this sound and have no objections to Disklavier performances.

This CD not only demonstrates how rich ragtime was in the past but shows, with its inclusion of contemporary composers, how rich it is today. Ragtime is still evolving. I highly recommend this CD.

For a postpaid copy of A Ragtime Primer, send \$17.00 to PianoMania Music, 8300 Sierra College Blvd, Suite D, Roseville CA 95661.

NEW BOOK: *Al Jolson--A Bio-Discography*

By Larry F. Kiner and Philip R. Evans
Scarecrow Press, Inc. (ISBN 0-8108-2633-X)

Reviewed By Tim Gracyk

This bio-discography is so well done that it should serve as a model for other researchers compiling everything known about a major recording artist. The authors list all of Al Jolson's professional engagements--every recording (all takes are listed), all known radio broadcasts, all stage shows, all films.

The book is huge, over 800 pages. The only musical reference work in my library that is physically larger--slightly--is the heavy New Grove Dictionary Of Jazz. Phonograph collectors should envision four hardbound copies of Eric Reiss' The Compleat Talking Machine or two copies of Daniel Marty's The Illustrated History Of The Phonograph.

I stress size in case anyone confuses this bio-discography with a slim Al Jolson discography published by Greenwood in 1983. With many gaps, that earlier book is merely a selective discography. Also, consider how the two books differ in information on Jolson's first film, which is the Warner Brothers one-reeler Plantation Act, filmed on September 6, 1926 (it was made a year before The Jazz Singer and only a month after Vitaphone's first theater presentation, which consisted of Don Juan and eight shorts, all available today on laser disc). Whereas the early book has a mere 13 lines of information, the Kiner-Evans book has an entire page with rare photos, composer names, Vitaphone numbers, a date and page number for a New York Times review.

The difference between the 1982 Greenwood discography and the Scarecrow bio-discography is night and day. The latter is exhaustive, complete, rich in details. We learn not only what bandleaders conducted during recording sessions but who played in the bands, even for most early discs. When Jolson made his 1911 Victors, some famous musicians accompanying him included Emil Keneke on cornet, Rosario Bourdon on cello, Howard Rattay on violin, and

William H. Reitz on drums--with Walter B. Rogers directing. V78 readers may recognize these names since these fine musicians made their own black label Victor discs. On Columbia discs beginning in 1916, Jolson is accompanied by musicians such as Marshall P. Lufsky, George Stell and Howard Kopp--directed by Charles A. Prince.

Jolson collectors already know that for Brunswick recordings of the 1920s, labels often cite the bands that accompany the singer--Isham Jones Orchestra, Abe Lyman's California Orchestra, Carl Fenton's Orchestra, William F. Wirges and His Orchestra, Ray Miller and His Orchestra. This book goes a step further, listing names of individual musicians in the bands. Regardless of conductor, banjoist Harry Reser was present at just about each Brunswick session. We learn who accompanied Jolson even during rejected takes. For example, on October 30, 1925, Alfred Newman and His Orchestra conducted as Jolson sang "Miami" and "Nobody But Fanny." The Brunswick ledger shows that 16 musicians were used, Harry Reser one of them.

We learn at times how much accompanying musicians were paid. On March 31, 1948, musicians who accompanied Jolson for a Philco Radio Time rehearsal, including Red Nichols, were paid \$99 each. When Jolson recorded selections for The Jolson Story on September 6, 1945, studio musicians were paid from a range of rates: \$37.50, \$47.50, \$59.38, \$71.25. Conductor Morris Stoloff earned \$95 for the day's work.

The authors possess detailed information about Jolson's recordings because they examined company files, at least whatever files still exist. Page 57 tells the sad fate of original Brunswick files. When the authors asked MCA Records for information pertaining to Jolson's Brunswick discs, company executive Steve Hoffman showed what remained. The authors state, "Many of the pages

from the ledgers and many of the cards from the files had either been lost or destroyed...What was available was due to Mr. Hoffman's quick action of actually rescuing them from the trash bin. When Hoffman first started to work for MCA the material was literally being thrown into rubbish bins and he was able to save what was made available."

A description of the show Vera Violetta, which opened on November 13, 1911 in Albany, New York, is interesting since it credits Joseph C. Smith for production help—a very early reference to the future bandleader! This is the show in which Jolson sang "Rum Tum Tiddle," which was recorded on December 22, 1911 (Victor 17037).

Perhaps 400 visuals are in this book—photographs, sheet music covers, inter-office memos discussing Jolson, Brunswick ledger pages, opening night programs from the 1925 Big Boy and the 1926 Artists And Models.

The lids of Jolson cylinders are duplicated here, at least those of Electraphone Records 3001 and 3013, which are two-minute cylinders issued in 1985, themselves dubbings of 1927 discs. The possibility of Jolson making Edison cylinders on February 9, 1910 is explored. The two titles allegedly recorded are "Come Along My Mandy" and "That Mesmerizing Mendelssohn Tune." Newspapers in 1910 quoted Jolson as making the recordings, but the authors also cite Jim Walsh's contention that the session never took place. It is a Jolson mystery, the authors noncommittal on

whether the session took place.

The labels of rare records are a pleasure to examine—Vitaphone discs, 20th Century Fox test pressings, British issues of Jolson material. Even Jolson's Little Wonder from 1914, "Back To The Carolina You Love" (Little Wonder 20), is shown. Since photographing etched Little Wonders is difficult, the authors duplicated the label by shading the disc's surface with a pencil.

The writing is clear and information is accurate, which I say after having done a random search with a stack of records on my desk. I can think of no omissions though one can argue that missing is a list of proper speeds for Jolson's pre-1920 discs. After all, few of his early discs are pitched correctly if played at 78 RPM. No book on a popular artist cites proper playing speeds as do a few books on classical artists, such as Caruso, Tetrzzini, and De Luca. I look forward to the time when books on popular artists cite correct playing speeds.

Jolson fans will love this coffee-table book listing every known performance of Asa Yoelson, a.k.a. Jolie. Anyone about to compile a discography of any other recording artist should examine this and try to meet its standards.

For a postpaid copy of Al Jolson—A Bio-Discography (hardcover only), send \$82.75 to University Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham MD 20706. Or phone 800-462-6420.

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NEW BOOK: *Ruffo: My Parabola*

By Titta Ruffo

Baskerville Publishers (ISBN 1-880909-39-1)

Reviewed by Charles Arnhold

Baskerville Publishers has taken one of the most famous autobiographies of a great singer—curiously, a book never before translated into English though written six decades ago—and updated it with copious notes supplied by experts. Included is a complete discography by William R. Moran. Capping the production is a well-engineered compact disc featuring 19 of the singer's famous recordings. The CD slips into a handy pouch attached to the inside front cover.

Titta Ruffo's legendary La Mia Parabola, is an absolute must for collectors of historical vocal recordings. Certain passages have been quoted over and over through the years on countless record jackets and in books about singers of the past, but this is the first time the whole work has been easily available to those not fluent in Italian. The translation is by Connie Mandracchia DeCaro.

So many singers' autobiographies turn out to be puff-pieces, written only to stress a singer's fame and virtuous dedication to art, rarely revealing anything substantial about the artist. I think of Calvé, Eames, Alda, even Farrar (when will someone write her story properly?). We learn in their celebrated books that they were always right, always put upon by others. It can't really have been that way, and Titta Ruffo proves this.

Ruffo was a wonderfully "natural" writer. Candor and vivid language make reading this book a pleasure. One feels Ruffo learned how to be honest with himself and thus with the reader. Even in the few passages in which Ruffo says unkind things about colleagues, such as his meeting tenor Giuseppe Anselmi, one is inclined to accept implied criticisms as frank statements of fact. I never feel Ruffo is indulging in axe-grinding. That is refreshing. Even the simple title, My Parabola, shows a willingness to look at his life without sentiment or regret. He had a great career. When it was over, he could look back, perhaps a little wistfully, and accept that it was indeed over.

Every so often a singer appears for whom there is no precedent. Adelina Patti was such a singer, so naturally gifted that by the age of 20 she was universally acknowledged as the world's greatest singer. Caruso became Caruso through hard work. Chaliapin was unique and has had no successor. Callas arrived at a time when the world was ready—due partly to the newly introduced long-playing record, partly to the drying-up of new opera compositions which pleased the public—to reassess the works of Rossini, Donizetti, and particularly Bellini.

With Ruffo, it was the voice above all else. By his own account, he discovered his voice almost accidentally. He attended a performance of Cavalleria Rusticana with his elder brother and later at home, to the brother's accompaniment on flute, sang the Siciliana. Out came a huge voice: "[T]owards the end of the serenade, though I forgot the words, I came out with the notes and my voice this time was even more beautiful and free. At the end I heard applause coming from the houses nearby and also someone calling 'Bravo!' That was my first success as a singer!...It seemed to me that the voice gushed out without the slightest effort, natural, limpid and powerful" (46-47).

In continental Europe (including Russia) and Latin America, Ruffo became, in terms of popularity, the successor to Cotogni and Battistini. In Italy and Spain, he was idolized. No one had ever heard such a voice. Beginning in 1904, Ruffo recorded for Pathé, The Gramophone Co., and Victor. The 15 Pathés of 1904 are rare but not impossibly so. As Ruffo's first recordings, they deserve a hearing. Even Pathé's twangy acoustics could not repress Ruffo's giant voice. Many of the HMV's and Victors are common enough. Novice collectors should be able to assemble a representative selection with ease. Ruffo claimed to have made cylinders before the turn of the century but none have turned up, as far as I know.

His career in the United States developed haltingly. During Caruso's tenure at the Met, Ruffo sang only once—on November 19, 1912 in Thomas' Hamlet with a second-string cast. Much has been made of this. Citing the fact that Ruffo joined the Met in the 1921-22 season—that is, after Caruso's death—some have asserted that Caruso prevented Ruffo's performing at the Met, which is nonsensical. Caruso was not that kind of artist and had no reason to fear Ruffo.

If anything stood in Ruffo's way, it was his own star-status. A baritone—or bass, for that matter—commanding huge fees at the Met was unheard of. I remember reading once that in the era when Eames, Melba, and Jean de Reszke earned \$1500 to \$2000 for Met performances, Pol Plancon's fee was a mere \$200. Caruso and Farrar were Gatti-Cazzaza's superstars and were paid accordingly. Gatti felt he had two superb baritones already in residence at the Met. Pasquale Amato came in 1908 and was more versatile than Ruffo (the list of Amato's roles at the Met is eye-popping) and Giuseppe de Luca came in 1915. Also, Antonio Scotti was still active. Adding another star baritone would have been financially risky.

Ruffo adds another reason for not joining the Met earlier: his favorite role was Hamlet but Gatti-Cazzaza did not like the opera. Another favorite for Ruffo was Leoncavallo's Edipo Re, which had been written for him. His other roles at that time included Figaro, Iago, and Rigoletto. So if Gatti did not like Hamlet, was not eager to risk money on an unknown Leoncavallo one-act opera, and already had two of the greatest baritones of the day for roles such as Figaro, Iago, and Rigoletto—well, why pay high fees for Ruffo?

Ruffo did join the Met in 1921, partially enticed by the idea of singing Otello with Caruso. As the one Ruffo-Caruso recording—"Si, pel ciel" (Victor 89075)—suggests, a Ruffo-Caruso pairing on stage is one of the great might-have-beens in opera. Ruffo's Met appearances were infrequent, almost more in the nature of a famous guest artist. Most of his U.S. appearances were in Chicago, where he was idolized.

Some writers dwell upon Ruffo's vocal

decline in the 1920s. They cite the Ruffo-Gigli duets of 1926. This is a little unfair, especially when measured against today's baritones. Ruffo made his debut in 1898, so by the time the duets were recorded, he had been singing professionally for 28 years. How many singers stay at their peaks after two and a half decades? I can think of very few, especially among baritones. Amato, who was a year younger than Ruffo, no longer sang with major companies after 1921. Tibbett's career lasted just about 20 years. It seems to me that, among Golden Age singers, only Battistini and de Luca—perhaps also Riccardo Stracciari—were front-rank baritones who showed no vocal decline after a quarter-century of singing. It is rare for a singer to maintain his or her instrument in perfect condition for more than twenty years.

Ruffo's influence on the course of opera singing may be more significant than the career itself. His incredible organ defined the "sound" of the Italian baritone. Just as no Italian tenor except Tito Schipa has risen to star status since the days of Caruso without to some extent recalling a memory of the great Neapolitan's sound, so audiences have listened to baritones—from the days of Bonelli, Danise and Tibbett up to Sherrill Milnes—in hopes of hearing something akin to the Ruffo "sound" even if these audiences know nothing about Ruffo himself. That may not be a good thing. Singing teachers grind young baritones to dust hoping to produce that huge, ringing, focused tone.

There was more to Ruffo's art than just the voice. Although he arguably lacked the ultimate finesse of, say, Amato, he knew how to use his gifts. He may be the finest Rigoletto on record. His Otello excerpts are required listening for voice connoisseurs. Hamlet fit him like a glove.

The book is 490 pages and has over 60 excellent photos. Baskerville Publications has done a wonderful job with this, the first in a promised series edited by Andrew Farkas. Keep e'm coming!

For a postpaid copy of My Parabola, send \$43.50 to Norbeck & Peters, PO Box 4, Woodstock NY 12498-0004. Phone (800) 654-5302.

NEW BOOK:

America On Record: A History Of Recorded Sound

By Andre Millard

Cambridge University Press (ISBN 0-521-47556-2)

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

Collectors have needed a recording industry history for some time. This gap in the field became conspicuous when the second edition of From Tinfoil To Stereo went out of print. We can buy books about specific companies or their products—Edison, Victor, even Gennett—and two different researchers, Guy Marco and Allan Sutton, have made valuable contributions with their encyclopedic approaches. A detailed narrative history of the industry is also needed so readers can understand how events are connected.

The authors of the 1994 edition of From Tinfoil To Stereo had a chance to write a history of lasting value. It was a matter of addressing errors in previous editions of Tinfoil and adding new findings. Sadly, the old text was whittled down to its bones. Some new information was added to help offset discarded chunks of prose, but pro-Edison biases were preserved (Victor? Columbia? they are mentioned a few times) and new errors were added. An opportunity was lost.

Andre Millard has stepped in to fill the gap. America On Record: A History Of Recorded Sound provides an introduction to the industry's development. It is longer and more detailed than Roland Gelatt's influential The Fabulous Phonograph, now out of print. But Millard's is not a very satisfying history.

It has strengths. Millard wrote this history without bias towards any one company or any one type of music. The prose is clear and often elegant. In paperback form, this is priced within most budgets. V78 readers will welcome the news that Millard gives as much attention to formative years of the industry as to mid-century and modern developments, giving details about key figures of the industry's early decades: Emile Berliner (along with assistant Werner Suess), Bell and Tainter, George

W. Johnson, George Gouraud, Frank Seaman, Francesco Tamagno, Thomas Lambert, Black Swan's Harry Pace. Some details will delight advanced collectors, like his discussion of the Chicago Talking Machine Company introducing spring-motor models "based on the patents of Edward Amet," with the Echophone selling "at around \$10" (53).

Millard covers the industry up to modern times. Along the way, he discusses John Lomax's field recordings, the success of Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues," Western Electric's experiments with electrical recordings, the Orthophonic, the V-Disc, Bing Crosby giving Les Paul an Ampex machine. We are taken on tours of Edison's West Orange factories and Victor's Camden factory.

The photographs are wonderful, some rare: Emile Berliner inspecting discs, Berliner's Washington shop, Diamond Discs being pressed, inventor Harry Pfannenstiehl next to a Western Electric disc player attached to a film projector.

Millard states in his Preface, "This is an interdisciplinary book intended for students in History and American Studies, and their pressing schedules have been uppermost in my mind during the preparation of the manuscript." The book would be better if other things—not the tight schedules of college students—had been uppermost in Millard's mind. I am not sure what classes will use this as a text, but if it finds a market in universities, then at least one recording history will remain in print, which is good for the field. Moreover, if college students buy this, the text may generate in young people an interest in old recordings and vintage machines.

Millard's book may satisfy beginning collectors. Certainly college students will be oblivious to the odd generalizations that could perturb advanced collectors.

Consider his statement that "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny" sold "millions of copies of sheet music and was a best-selling cylinder record" (89). Books show that it was indeed issued on cylinder—Edison 2237 from the 1890s; Blue Amberols 28256, 5116, 4546—but I find no evidence that a cylinder version was a best-seller (which version does Millard have in mind?) whereas copies of Alma Gluck singing this on a 12" disc (Victor 88481) pop up with amazing regularity. Like other collectors, I have multiple copies in my garage. I have not seen the song on cylinder.

I wonder if Millard has listened carefully to the old recordings he discusses. He characterizes Paul Whiteman's upbeat "Whispering" as a "slow ballad" (not so!). He then calls "Whispering" the "most popular recording of the decade" but cites no source for this bold claim. Interestingly, various books claim one or another acoustic disc to be the "most popular," yet authors cite different discs. No reliable sales figures of the acoustic era exist, so naming the "best selling" 78 of this or that decade is a guessing game that historians should avoid. Incidentally, the May 1965 issue of Hobbies reports that Whiteman himself told Jim Walsh that "Three O'Clock In The Morning" was the band's best-seller.

Millard seems to know the early industry from books (not from collecting machines and old recordings), which is no handicap if a researcher studies the best books in the field and ignores the worst. I applaud Millard for turning to sources written by experts in the field—Allen Koenigsberg, Brian Rust, Richard Spottswood, George Frow, Robert Baumbach—but his reliance on some other sources suggests he has not recognized which works are essential and which are flawed. The flawed sources account for at least some errors.

We can easily overlook a few errors, but most pages contain a statement that is an outright error or at least needs serious qualification. Some statements are so inaccurate that I have trouble viewing Millard as an authority on the industry.

Some errors are probably mere typos, like Millard's citing 1919 (instead of 1929) as the year

RCA acquired Victor. Some problems stem from poor word choice, as in this assertion on page 78: "In 1913 Edison finally deserted the cylinder format...and introduced the Edison Diamond Disc player" (78). "Deserted" implies the Edison Company ceased making cylinders in 1913. He later employs the same verb to say the opposite, claiming Edison in the late '20s "paid heavily...for his reluctance to desert the cylinder format" (164).

Far more troubling, on page 94, is the way he characterizes Billy Murray as "a music-hall star who had made some of the first recordings on cylinder in the 1880s..." The problems here are compound. If Millard knows nothing about this famous singer, could he not have shown his chapter's draft to some expert who could correct it? Murray, born in 1877, did not record in the 1880s, and by the time the tenor made cylinders in San Francisco in 1897, so many other artists had preceded him that Murray's were in no sense among "the first recordings on cylinder." By calling Murray a "music-hall star," Millard wrongly implies that Billy Murray was a British entertainer. Perhaps Millard, who was raised in England, thinks "music-hall star" is synonymous with vaudeville star, but Murray was far from that. He was not a star when he worked in vaudeville, and he was not in vaudeville when he was a star. Readers of Jim Walsh articles in Hobbies will know about Murray's work with the Popular Talking Machine Artists (later the Eight Popular Victor Artists). It was not a vaudeville or "music hall" act.

Consider the different ways Millard errs when discussing Irving Berlin songs. About "Alexander Ragtime Band," Millard writes, "The two most successful recordings of the song were made by the black-faced performers Al Jolson and Harlan & Collins" (99). What is Millard's source for the claim that Jolson's was one of the "two most successful"? Jolson recorded it on March 25, 1947 with Bing Crosby and on March 31, again with Crosby (V-Disc 814). Is Millard aware that Jolson recorded it only as a duet with Bing Crosby? Assigning to Jolson full credit for a Jolson-Crosby duet is unorthodox, to say the least.

The 1911 recording of the Berlin song by Collins and Harlan (Victor 16908) was genuinely significant and successful, but the team never went by the name "Harlan & Collins." It is one more indication that Millard knows little about old recordings. (How credible would a film history be if an author referred to "Hardy & Laurel" or "Costello & Abbott"?). Also, Collins and Harlan were not black-faced performers. No photo shows the duo in black-face nor do written sources indicate they blackened their faces.

In referring to Bing Crosby's success with Berlin's "White Christmas," Millard calls the song "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas." Millard mislabels various songs, calling into question his research methods along with his knowledge of famous tunes. On page 70 he says "We'll Meet Again" was published in 1917, but that famous song, written by Ross Parker and Hughie Charles, was published in 1939. Millard probably means Richard Whiting's "Till We Meet Again," but this was published in 1918, not 1917.

He claims "Down On The Wabash" is a song that "demonstrated mass appeal before the introduction of the phonograph." What song by this title had such mass appeal? Does he mean Paul Dresser's "On The Banks Of The Wabash"? But that was published in 1897, long after the phonograph's introduction.

Footnotes show that Millard relied on a work of fiction, Joel Whitburn's Pop Memories 1890-1954. This book assigns chart numbers to early recordings—that is, for years when no charts existed. For example, Whitburn cites Billy Murray as having his first Number One hit in 1904, "Navajo." Ada Jones' 1905 recording of "Just Plain Folks" is said to have reached Number Three on the charts in 1903, staying there for exactly three weeks! And so on. What is the basis for Whitburn's chart positions, stated with scientific precision? A fertile imagination, guesswork, thin air—take your pick. For Millard to cite Whitburn is analogous to a biography of a modern political figure citing a supermarket tabloid as a credible or reliable source. Of course, no major publisher would allow one of its biographies to cite tab-

loids. Millard's final draft should have been edited by someone knowledgeable about the early recording industry and about the field's literature.

I am dismayed by claims on page 98 that "Scott Joplin's masterpieces were not recorded" (some were) and that "ragtime records were...confined to banjo solos" (not true). A footnote for Millard's ragtime discussion cites Peter Gammond's Scott Joplin and the Ragtime Era, but Gammond establishes not only that Joplin works were recorded in the composer's lifetime but that military bands and various instrumentalists recorded ragtime recordings. In short, Millard gives a footnote to a book that contradicts Millard's claims.

At times Millard fails to cite a source, and I am curious where he learned that the "ODJB's second release was 'Mournin' Blues.'" It was issued in February 1919. Millard's claim is true only if we ignore seven ODJB discs (the Columbia disc issued on August 10, 1917; three of the four Aeolian-Vocalions; three Victors issued in 1918).

Since Millard is author of the 1990 Edison And The Business Of Invention, I had expected discussions of Edison products to be well-informed, but even here he oversimplifies and errs. Edison Diamond Disc products were introduced in 1912, not 1913. One could say they were formally introduced—with advertising hoopla—in 1913, but goods were on the market in a limited way in late 1912. Millard claims "the first releases were plagued with an annoying surface noise," but discs from 1912 to 1916 can sound great. Perhaps he has in mind the notorious surfaces on discs made from 1917 to 1920, a later period. This problem, caused by poor quality sprayed-on condensite, is analyzed by Ron Dethlefsen and Ray Wile in Edison Disc Artists & Records, a work curiously missing from Millard's Select Bibliography.

Millard cites "unappealing musical selections" as "the main reason why Edison's sales dropped throughout the 1920s," ignoring here how deeply radio cut into all companies' sales. Finally, is it fair to claim without qualification that "the Diamond Disc line was a commercial failure"? Is Millard aware that Diamond Discs sold by the millions (7 million sold in 1921 alone) and earned

profits until the late 1920s?

Discussing Edison discs, he insists that "the lack of software, pre-recorded discs, was discouraging people from buying the hardware, the disc player." His source for this is a memo dated August 17, 1911 and preserved at the Edison National Historic Site. What relevance has a 1911 memo on the marketability of Diamond Discs, which were not available until late 1912? Millard should thumb through Diamond Disc catalogs or Ray Wile's Edison Disc Recordings to see the thousands of titles—or "software," as he puts it—available on Diamond Discs.

Consider the caption on page 55 under one splendidly preserved photo of an Edison shop in Patterson, New Jersey that is packed with cylinders and related products. The book gives the year as 1892. We can see "92" written on the print, but that may be a number identifying the photo as part of a series or a negative's number. The large horns in the photo were not on the market so early nor were the ornate cabinets. Shelves appear to hold Amberol cylinder boxes. This looks circa 1908. Photographs in issues of The Edison Phonograph Monthly show shops around 1908 similarly stocked.

Perhaps an editor added the photo's caption, but there is textual evidence that Millard thinks the industry was roaring by 1892, such as on page 82 when he speaks of "the most popular recordings of the late 1880s." The two songs he cites as being "most popular" in the late 1880s are really from 1892—"Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me A Bow-Wow" and "After The Ball." Moreover, they never were best-selling recordings.

I will not examine here the book's discussions of modern developments—they include the Sony Walkman, DAT technology, rap and hip-hop, the Sex Pistols—but I see problems even in later chapters. Since Millard wrote this text for students, he should be accurate when discussing the Beatles since this is one topic by which some students will judge Millard's credibility. For example, the Beatles' Revolver LP is from 1966, not 1965.

No one person can be expected to know everything about recorded sound from 1877 to the

1990s. Authors examining a complex industry spanning a century must turn to specialists for help, circulating drafts of a book and then incorporating corrections. In his Preface Millard gives thanks to people who are genuine experts. Whether Millard asked the right questions and incorporated all their suggestions, I cannot say, but factual errors do add up quickly.

Millard wrote a book with some strengths. There is much that is correct. But some errors are egregious, indicating the author is not an expert in the field. I can recommend this as the best narrative history of the recording industry in print today, but that is a heavy qualification. Virtually nothing else is in print.

For a postpaid copy of America On Record: A History Of Recorded Sound (softback), send \$17.95 to Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn NY 11226. Fax number is 718-941-1408. With every order, Koenigsberg includes 100 new medium-loud steel phonograph needles.



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NEW CD: Phil Harris and His Orchestra--Echoes From The Cocoanut Grove

Take Two 416CD

Reviewed by Ron Pendergraft

Phil Harris died on August 11, 1995. This new CD pays tribute to an endearing entertainer and fine musician. For those old enough to remember, listening to Jack Benny on radio in the 1940s was a must. Phil Harris, sidekick and sometimes thorn in Benny's side, was always referred to as "with the band." I was never sure decades ago if the band was Harris' or not, and I am still not certain who led Jack Benny's band. But if any Benny fans have doubts about Harris' musical versatility and qualifications as bandleader, this new Take Two CD will clear them.

The CD features Harris from 1932-1933. Not many 78s from this period pop up--regardless of artist--since these were among the Depression's worst years. I am grateful that CDs are making it easy to acquire music from this era.

If Harris is remembered for much these days, it is probably for his Jack Benny association, his 1940s hits such as "The Preacher And The Bear," perhaps even his marriage in 1941 to actress Alice Faye (does anyone recall the Phil Harris-Alice Faye radio show of the late '40s?). He made recordings in San Francisco as early as 1931, and it would be sad if his early Depression era work were forgotten. Even if someday a CD were to reissue all early Harris discs, it would not duplicate this Take Two CD since everything here is from transcribed radio shows.

Harris uses 15 musicians in addition to vocalists. The band is remarkably versatile, playing sweet music, novelty numbers, and hot jazz. Most of the 20 titles here will be familiar to those who love early '30s music--"Mimi," "You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me," "Lazy River." Only one song recorded by Harris for a record company at this time--"How's About It?" (Columbia 2766)--was included on the radio shows used for this CD.

Vocals are by Harris himself, Leah Ray, the Three Ambassadors, Lee Norton, Jeffery Gill, and Jack Smith (not the "Whispering Baritone" but the Smith who sang with the Three Ambassadors and

who later hosted TV's You Asked For It). Harris himself was only an average singer, best at delivering comic lines in novelty numbers. But the others here are quite good. Imagine the Rhythm Boys taking lessons from the Boswell Sisters, and you have an idea of the Three Ambassadors' sound on the upbeat "Baby." I particularly enjoy vocals by Leah Ray, whose sliding from note-to-note is effective. She went from singing in Harris' Orchestra to appearing in seven films from 1933 to 1938.

Four pages of well-written notes are included. This CD should delight anyone addicted to music from the 1932-'32 era.

For a postpaid copy of this new CD, send \$17.50 to World's Records, PO Box 1922, Novato CA 94948. Phone is (800) 742-6663. California residents must add 7.25% for state tax. To learn about other new CDs featuring reissued material, request World's large mail-order catalog.



The CD shows Harris as a fine exponent of early '30s music--yes, the Harris who later recorded the above, "That's What I Like About the South," and "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)."



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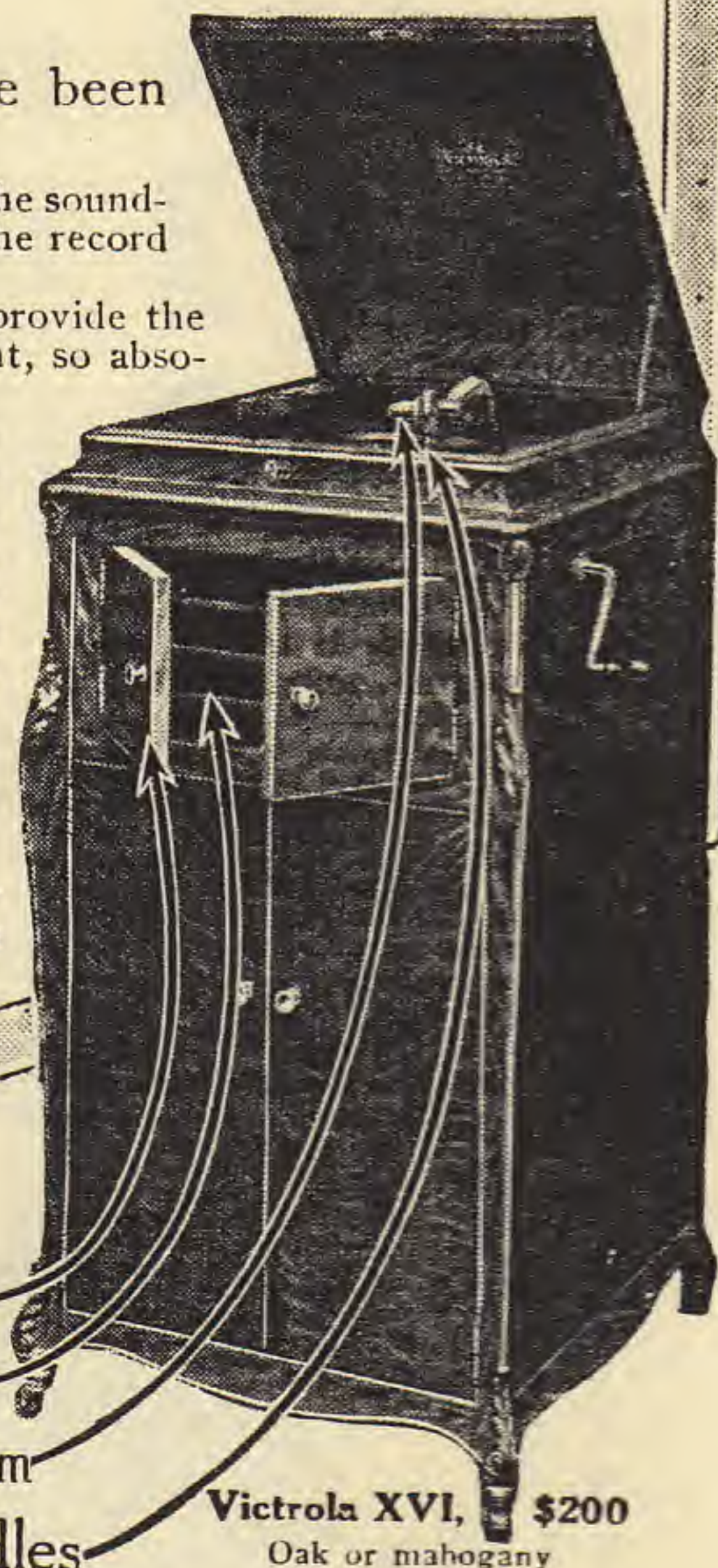
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